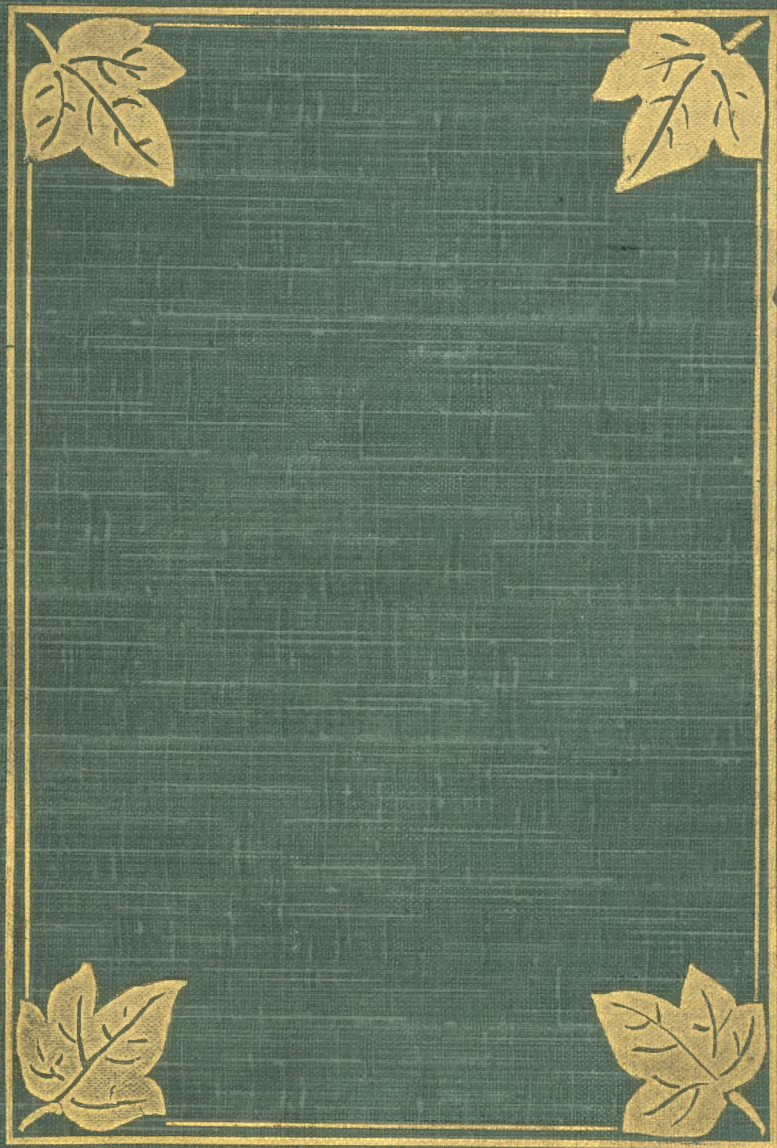


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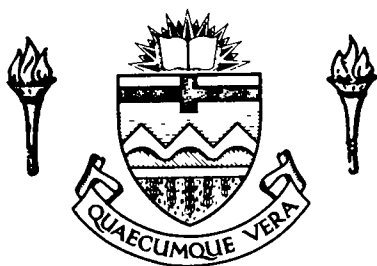


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GLIMPSES OF TENNYSON



LORD TENNYSON

From a miniature

GLIMPSES OF TENNYSON
AND OF SOME OF HIS
RELATIONS AND FRIENDS
By AGNES GRACE WELD

WITH AN APPENDIX

BY THE LATE

BERTRAM TENNYSON

WILLIAMS & NORGATE

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*I dedicate
to my beloved Cecilia, Maud, and Violet,
the daughters of Horatio Tennyson,
these memories of our revered Uncle,
and of some of our relations who were
dear to him*

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Glimpses of Tennyson

and of some of his Relations and Friends

CHAPTER I

TENNYSONS AND SELLWOODS

“LET those who love us edit us after death,” said Alfred Tennyson shortly before he passed away, and it is in the name of my reverential love for our great poet that I am going to try and tell in the course of these pages what manner of man Tennyson seemed to me during the many years of close companionship it was my privilege to enjoy with him, and what I gathered to be the teaching he most desired to convey to mankind by his

example, as well as by his spoken and written words.

His wife, Emily Sellwood, was my mother's eldest sister, her youngest sister Louisa being the wife of his elder brother Charles, but though thus only my uncles by marriage, Charles and Alfred Tennyson treated me just as if I had been their own child; indeed, the latter said that the fact of my father's having left him my guardian placed him in a sort of parental relationship to me.

Long before the double marriage to which I have just alluded took place, an intimate friendship existed between my maternal grandfather and his three daughters, and Tennyson and his parents, brothers, and sisters. The young people were constantly riding and driving over to spend the day with each other, for Horncastle, the busy Lincolnshire town where the Sellwoods resided, was only seven miles from Somersby, at whose pretty country rectory Dr Tennyson, the learned father of the poet, lived as clergyman of the parish for many years. Since

the Sellwoods entered so much into the lives of both my Tennyson uncles, a few words about my grandfather Sellwood will not be out of place, especially as in him my uncles found much that was congenial to their own nature, especially the determination to undergo any self-sacrifice rather than swerve one iota from the strictest truth and honour, and also the intense patriotism which, as it stirred Tennyson to sing of his country's noble deeds, had made my grandfather long in his youth to emulate those deeds by serving in the campaigns then going on against Napoleon.

A rich living in the family failed to shake my grandfather or his brothers from their fixed conviction that the army, not the church, was their vocation; but their love for their mother, who got it into her head that they would be slain if they went to the wars, made them give up the military career, even though the Duke of York, when he was reviewing them as volunteers, spoke of them as the finest officers he had ever come across. For a time they lived the expensive life of the

country gentlemen of the period on the large family estates in Berkshire. But before long my grandfather came to feel that it was his duty to take up some profession, and having taken up that of a solicitor he worked in it with a single eye for the glory of God and the good of his fellow-men. For a few brief years his new home in Lincolnshire was brightened by the companionship of his young bride, the sister of Sir John Franklin, the famous explorer who lost his life in the Arctic regions and on whose cenotaph in Westminster Abbey are inscribed the following lines by Tennyson—

“Not here! the white North has thy
bones; and thou,
Heroic sailor-soul,
Art passing on thine happier voyage now
Toward no earthly pole.”

In the very prime of her youth and beauty my grandmother died, leaving to my grandfather's charge the baby Louisa, and Emily and Anne still of very tender years. The baby was the first to leave

her father's roof, as a lovely girl in her teens, to become the wife of Charles, that elder brother of Tennyson whom he loved so dearly, and of whom he wrote in "In Memoriam" the following lines:—

“ ‘More than my brothers are to me’—
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
I know thee of what force thou art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

“ But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's mint,
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

“ At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
One lesson from one book we learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
To black and brown on kindred brows.”

And in the prefatory poem prefixed to his brother Charles' "Collected Sonnets,"¹ Tennyson writes:—

¹ Published after Charles Turner's death
by Macmillan & Co.

“ And thou hast vanish’d from thine
own
To that which looks like rest,
True brother only to be known
By those who love thee best.

“ And thro’ this midnight breaks the sun
Of sixty years away ;
The light of days when life begun,
The days that seem to-day.

“ When all my griefs were shared with
thee,
And all my hopes were thine---
As all thou wert was one with me
May all thou art be mine !”

Charles and Alfred Tennyson wrote together the “ Poems by Two Brothers,” but their relationship was in after years almost lost sight of by Charles taking the surname of his uncle Turner on inheriting the property of the latter, whom he succeeded in the living of Grasby, not far from Brigg, in one of the prettiest parts

of his native county, whose varied features formed the theme of many of those sonnets of his that I have heard his brother Alfred speak of as "exquisite." During the long visits I yearly paid to my Uncle Charles and Aunt Louisa, I saw how ungrudgingly the gifts that would have made them shine in the most intellectual society were turned to the service of the poor villagers among whom their lot was cast. When they first went to Grasby some of these peasants were sunk in such gross superstition that they firmly believed of a Sunday school teacher, of most benevolent aspect, that when she walked lame for a time it was in consequence of a piece having been bitten out of her leg by a dog when she had assumed the form of a hare. The neighbours were so certain that she bewitched them that they waved branches of the rowan-tree at her whenever she appeared at her door, and finally they killed her by a course of petty persecutions. To free yourself from certain bewitchments they believed it was necessary to steal a sheep and cut it in twain, and laying each half

upon a bit of scarlet cloth, to pass between the divided carcase. Patiently did my uncle and aunt labour to teach their flock the folly of such superstition, and their labours were not in vain, since their parishioners loved them very dearly, and would tell how the vicar and his wife would get up in the dead of a stormy night, and go forth, lantern in hand, to the bedsides of the small-pox patients who had the disease in so virulent a form that all their own relations had fled in terror from them.

The former vicar of Grasby, Charles' old "Uncle Sam Turner," had lived three miles off at the little town of Caistor on the "wold," but the time consumed in getting to and fro in the deep snow decided the Tennyson-Turners that it was their duty to live among their flock as the Nonconformist ministers of the village already did. With these ministers my uncle always strove to keep on the best of terms; and I well remember how he would stand on his lawn on a summer Sunday afternoon and listen with the keenest in-

terest to an open-air service that was being held close by ; though his innate shrinking from publicity used to set him wondering as the preacher would shout in a stentorian voice, " Now, brethren, let us count up how many the Lord has saved at this service," and would proceed to enumerate the " converted " by name. The Christianity of the villagers was apt to be of a somewhat stern cast, and their views as to the present condition of the deceased were very decided, as my aunt experienced when on talking to an old couple one evening about something that Hobbes, the 17th century philosopher, had said, the husband turned sharply round to his wife, and exclaimed eagerly, " Why, loovey, that's the graate Hobbes that's in hell." The tone in which this assertion was made, and the expression of the speaker's face made visible by the lurid glare of the winter's fire, combined to give quite a creepy sensation. I knew that old couple well, as indeed I knew almost all the villagers, who were a fine race of somewhat Scandinavian type, and very conser-

vative ways, the men still reaping with the sickle and threshing wheat with the flail, the women still wearing the quilted sun bonnets that suited their flashing eyes so admirably. Men and women alike had much skill in the preparation of simples—the valuable recipes for which had been handed down to them from their ancestors, though their present descendants have unfortunately consigned these useful remedies to the same limbo as such merely superstitious cures as that highly approved by their mothers of a “shebobbyurchinjaw”¹ for rheumatism. Grasby was a favourite spot for gipsy encampments, on account of a circular chalk quarry in which they pitched their tents, and to which they summoned the vicar to baptise their children. One beautiful girl was tamed into domestic service, but as soon as her tribe came into the neighbourhood again, the spell of the old free life carried her back to the bosom of her people. She never

¹ Jaw of a female hedgehog, spelt all in one word.

made so good a servant as the Grasby girls did, they being one and all simply splendid in that capacity, not least so her fellow-servant Alkamy, who always maintained that this name, by which my uncle had been asked to christen her, came from the Bible, though I have entirely failed to find it there.

The vicar's servants were kept very busy cooking for the sick poor to whom the Turners' generosity knew no bounds; and who loved that red brick vicarage as much as I did. It was a cosy house, built at the foot of the high chalk ridge or wold that ran like a backbone across the wide valley over which it commanded a magnificent view.

The front windows of the vicarage looked out over lawns and meadows, and were embowered in roses and honeysuckle and clematis, and the summer breezes that brought the sweet fragrance of these flowers into the rooms, wafted in with them also the weirdly musical notes of an Eolian harp.

On the walls hung many valuable paint-

ings collected in Italy by the 'Tennysons' father in the days when no government enactments forbade the Italian nobility to export their art treasures. Both my uncles Alfred and Charles have often told me of the influence exerted upon their minds by the poetic dreams that were suggested to them by the beautiful picture of "Armida and Rinaldo with the Decoy-Nymph," concerning which my Uncle Charles wrote:—

“ Dear is that picture for my childhood's
sake,—

The man asleep, so near to love or
harm :

The winged boy that stays Armida's
arm,

The siren-girl all hushed lest he awake ;
While in the background of that
pictured tale,

Sown with enchanted herbs and clad
with gloom,

A sombre eminence o'erlooks the vale,

A purple hill where all my dreams
found room.

'Tis strange with how few touches of a
brush
That painter's hand supplied, in life's
fresh dawn,
The mystic thoughts I loved! Sweet
thoughts; deep-drawn;
Far destined; cherished still without a
blush;
Deep-drawn—from God's own fount of
mystery,
Far destined—for my soul must ever
be.”¹

Over the fireplace hung the graceful
portrait of the mother of the Tennysons,
as a young woman, clad in a short-waisted
white dress and a big Gainsborough black
hat, which set off the piquant beauty of
her sweet face with its dark laughing eyes
and its rosy complexion—a beauty of
which some traces remained when she
smiled in her old age upon my tender

¹ No. clxiii. in “Collected Sonnets,” by
Charles Tennyson Turner, published in
1884 by Messrs Macmillan.

years. On his brother Charles' death all his father's pictures were removed to Farringford by Alfred Tennyson, and this portrait of their mother placed by the latter's bedside that he might, as he expressed it, see her smiling on his morning waking. Her sons simply adored her, and were never weary of telling me about her. They were also fond of her sister, "Aunt Mary Ann," whom I learnt to love as a frequent visitor at Grasby Vicarage. She seemed to us, who knew her worth, "a delightful proof that a single woman may keep her heart open and loving, free from all old-maidism, and her spirit ardent, though softened," as my Aunt Emily said of her.

When I was a child my grandfather Sellwood (who afterwards came to live with us and died at our home in Bath in 1867) lived with the Turners at Grasby, and used to take me with him in the brisk walks he kept up till he was past eighty. He and my Uncle Charles were at one in their love for the old-fashioned vicarage garden, but they totally differed in their

method of showing it. The latter had, to an excessive degree, the Tennyson aversion to having a single twig cut, whereas his father-in-law was for the judicious pruning which would have prolonged the life of the trees that were killing each other in their struggle for existence. He, however, allowed the master of the house to have his own way, and so the willow stakes slew the rose bushes, to which they had been tied as props, and grew in their place into such mighty trees as only Lincolnshire willows could have become. In their branches dwelt many of the wild birds that had waxed tame through my uncle's practice of feeding them every morning all the year round. When he went out to do this in the winter, he would wrap himself in the ample folds of a shaggy poncho to which he had become so much attached that he refused to leave it off, even when it had got torn right in the middle of the back. "Don't you see," he would say, "what an advantage that neat little patch is, because people are so taken up with looking at it that

they never think of looking for my faults?" My Uncle Charles had to the full the Tennyson originality in his way of putting things. Thus, he used to say, "I wish my curates would not remind me of a plaice rolling over from its brown upper side to its white under one, by turning their stoles round from their violet to their white sides, as they pronounce the words, 'Seeing now that this child is regenerate,' in the christening service." One of these curates was the afterwards well-known Doran, of church music fame, and I can remember what a disagreement he and my uncle had over the service in the *Directorium Anglicanum* (of which Mr Doran used to make private use) for exorcising flowers before using them for church decoration, my uncle stoutly maintaining that if any beings dwelt in the flowers, these must be angels, not devils. My uncle loved to examine the structure of plants with a microscope my mother had given him, his letter of thanks for which is so characteristic that I cannot resist quoting it.

GRASBY,

25th October 1856.

My dear Anne,—I discovered the microscope amongst its mystic envelopes with great pleasure, and put it to immediate use—the use you recommended as its first probation. Ladies and gentlemen who indulge in the notion of their personal smoothness should employ these three-guinea inspectors, and their vanity will be routed in a moment, and all resort to emollient soaps be discarded before the awful conviction that even in the most delicate little finger there are deep grooves and trenches and (if it be a gentleman's) shaggy defiles and wart-studded caverns that converge about his fine seal-ring and coat-of-arms. Indeed, it is a great treat to be enabled to turn a rural walk to such account in future, as I shall now be prepared to do. So thank you most kindly for the microscope, through which my skin indeed looks coarse, but your kindness only the more delicate and beautiful. With love to Charles,—Your affectionate brother, CHARLES TURNER.

To show how my uncle could adapt his mind to the varying circumstances of his correspondents, I will quote from three of his letters, the first to me as a merry child, the second to me as a young girl, the third to my father when he was in acute temporary bodily suffering.

To me he writes, in answer to a childish epistle, "You have stuck your little dog amongst the music, but as he is a 'nice dog' he does well; but let us see the next words, 'his favourite amusement is to bite my legs.' I have complimented him too soon, and you go on to say, 'He will eat anything but mustard.' You had better put mustard on your legs, then, or I shall be in constant apprehension about your pegs.

"My Leisure Hours have not arrived. They are taking their time, as Leisure Hours should do, I suppose, so you need not fear their arrival at last; only, if they linger very long, I shall bark at them as strangers, as Frisk did at the bear-skin."

The second letter was written shortly after having stayed with us at Aubrey

House, our Keyhaven home, just opposite the Isle of Wight, to which we used often to cross. He begins it by two sonnets which I give in their entirety, as there are verbal differences between this their first form and that in which they now appear (as ccxxiv. and ccxxvi. of "Collected Sonnets," by Charles Tennyson Turner).

THE NEEDLES LIGHT HOUSE.

From Aubrey House, Keyhaven.

The Downs and tender tinted cliffs are lost,
And nothing but the guardian fire remains,

That crimson-headed tower on the rough coast,

Whose steady lustre flashes not nor wanes
Till sunrise from the east restores again

The mighty Vectian¹ wold and tawny tract

Of shingle seen through bowers of arbutus
Like some fair cornfield mellow and compact.

¹ In allusion to the classical name of the Isle of Wight.

How that deep glow the deepening gloom
 attests,
How much is by that high-set lighthouse
 taught.
Mine eye rests on it as the spirit rests
In sorrow on some holy ardent thought,
'The sole light in our darkness! Those
 who dwell
Near these great beacons are instructed
 well.

A FAREWELL TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT:

In Lymington River.

Silent I gazed upon our foaming wake,
And silent on the island hills I gazed,
As up the ebbing stream we bore, to make
Our harbour, while the West athwart us
 blazed ;
What were my thoughts? My memory
 wander'd back
To those fair shores—the Needles and the
 Downs,
The happy woodlands and the little towns,
For every day a new and pleasant track ;

LOUISA TURNER

*From a painting
by Anne Weld*



How grieved we were those social walks
to lose,
Those friendly hands! The shadow of
our mast
And sail ran sadly o'er the fruitless ooze
At sunset, as between the banks we past
Of that tide-fallen river; spreading fast
To land and farther from their fond adieus.

My dear Agnes,—I return you in a manner good for evil, viz., two respectable sonnets relating to your own locality in return for a poisonous serpent, for this Pharaoh's Serpent¹ has got into the newspapers, as you may have noticed, and is represented as very dangerous for children and even adults. It is composed of the most deleterious material, and, moreover, looks like a sweetmeat, and whether burnt or inadvertently eaten by a hapless bairn, will work it woe. We have not tried it yet, partly because we thought a tiny or two of our village might like to see it. But we shall give it, knowing

¹ A scientific toy we had sent my uncle.

its awful character, in private and with precautions. What do you mean, you apparently harmless female hobble-de-hoy, by sending down to our unsophisticated village this fragment of ancient Egypt! Your horned poppy and shingle-grown nightshade are better. Love to Papa and Mamma,—Your still affectionate uncle,

CHARLES TURNER.

To my father my Uncle Charles writes :—

“I myself have a horror of pain, and God has mercifully spared me such a trial hitherto, but I have been tried much by nerves! I have come in course of years to accept trials of temperament and circumstances as developers of faith, searchers and cleansers. We need often to be purified with waters of Mara, bitter as gall itself. But provided we get our spiritual eye once fairly opened by our lifelong probations, intensified *as* God sees fit and *when*—we shall not undervalue the wholesome agonies.”

The same spirit as breathes in this letter animates the concluding lines of the

writer's sonnet, entitled, "Hope beneath the Waters," in these words of comfort—

"Meek patience is as diver's breath to all
Who sink in sorrow's sea, and many a
ray
Comes gleaming downward from the
source of day
To guide us reascending from our fall.
The rocks have bruised thee sore, but
angel's wings
Grow best from bruises, hope from
anguish springs."

My Uncle Charles reminded me very much in his ways with children of my childhood's friend, the author of *Alice in Wonderland*, and like the latter he attracted them to him as a magnet. His magnetic nature was potent likewise in attracting to Grasby the scattered members of his own large family of brothers and sisters on frequent visits. I wish I could remember more of the wise and witty words with which that brilliant band of brothers, Frederick, Alfred, Charles, Arthur, Septimus, and Horatio made the

walls of the vicarage parlour ring. All had the poetic temperament, and Frederick had, in addition, considerable musical and artistic gifts, which he indulged to the full in his beautiful Jersey home, whilst Arthur, too, could handle the pencil with considerable skill. Though my Uncle Charles was not himself either a painter or a musician, he thoroughly appreciated his wife's talents in that direction, and it always seemed to me that in the twain there dwelt but one soul. She was such an inseparable companion of her husband's that the villagers called them "two turtle doves," which my aunt said was not really a compliment, as "turtle doves happen to be some of the most quarrelsome of birds in spite of their affectionate cooing."

Apart from their travels along the Moselle with my father, and their visits to the Channel Islands, the 'Turners' longest journeys were those they were always ready to undertake at a moment's notice right across England to help and to comfort any of their relatives and friends who might need their tender ministrations.

A loving, gentle nature was that of this poet-pastor, who, if men and things were contrary, would only exclaim, "I wish we were all in Heaven," and find solace in writing one of those sonnets which imparted to so many that divine strength by which he was himself supported.

Although only two of the Tennysons were my relations by marriage, yet I used to see so much of most of the others at Grasby and Freshwater that they all adopted me as their niece. Especially was this the case with bonnie "Aunt Tilly," Alfred Tennyson's third sister, who entered so heartily into any fun that was going on, and with his youngest sister, "Aunt Cecilia," whose marriage with the learned Professor Lushington is commemorated at the end of "In Memoriam," as well as with the youngest brother Horatio, who used to say to my mother, "It always seems to me, Nanny, we must be really relations, for you have been just like my sister." One of my earliest recollections is his calling and beckoning to me as he sat smoking on the lawn at

Grasby Vicarage, and my inflicting on myself grievous bodily injury in crashing through a pane of glass, in answer to that call from "Nunke Caia Moke Pipe," and as the years went on, I learned to appreciate him more and more.

It is a rarer fault for people to think too little of themselves than to think too highly, but it is a fault which probably does more harm in the world through causing many a noble soul to miss its true vocation in life. Such was the case with "Uncle Horatio," for never was a man better fitted than he was to make an ideal parish priest, yet he never could be persuaded to think himself worthy of becoming a clergyman, and so his magnificent voice was only heard in lay ministry at the bedsides of the sick and dying with whom he spent most of his time when living at Freshwater,¹ and to whom he

¹ At "The Terrace," afterwards occupied by the Tennysons' cousin, Louis Ffytche, who died there at an advanced age. He and his brother General Albert

would insist on carrying off any special dainty intended for his own dinner—a meal which he would constantly omit to come home to—his hunger forgotten in making others partake with him of the Bread of Life. His was a loving spirit that dwelt especially on the Fatherhood of God and the Divine compassion, and when all beside had failed to remove the awful terror of perdition from the soul of the truly penitent sinner, he could change the look of hopeless agony into one of perfect peace.

I remember well having a conversation with an artisan who had gone grievously astray, and was longing to forsake his evil ways. “Why does not Mr Horatio come to see me?” he said. “Tell him to come, for he is the only man in the world who can ever save me.” Horatio Tennyson

Ffytche (who won laurels by his administration of one of our further Indian provinces) were men of that marked personality which distinguished most of the members of the family of Tennyson's mother, Elizabeth Ffytche.

took this as a divine call, and went at once to the cottage, where he spent hour after hour, till far into the night, wrestling for and with that soul, and this was the turning-point in the life of that father of a family whose children asked their mother wonderingly next day, "Why is father so kind to us now?"

The Freshwater cottagers have never forgotten the deeds of kindness done by their true and loving friend, and to this day the name of Horatio Tennyson is a household word ever held in reverence amongst them.

He used frequently to take his elder children with him in his visits to the poor, and his daughters Cecilia (wife of the Censor of the Unattached Students of Oxford University), Maud, and Violet have always found their chief delight in philanthropic work. Violet worked for years at Canning-town, till her health broke down under the strain, when she founded a home (which she still superintends) for the little slum children needing fresh country air.

Horatio Tennyson's beautiful and beloved first wife had died before he went

to Freshwater with his young family, and the Alfred Tennysons in consequence took to their loving hearts his motherless children, of whom the daughters alone survive. Bertram, the eldest son of Horatio Tennyson, was a most interesting personality. A short account of him will be found as the appendix to this volume, together with a tale and a poem from his pen, which were thought highly of by our uncle, Alfred Tennyson, when they appeared in a small privately-printed volume.

CHAPTER II

FRESHWATER DAYS

THE second of the Sellwood daughters to marry was my mother, Anne, who became the wife of Charles Richard Weld, a young barrister, whose ancestry was an interesting one, he being descended from the Earls of Mercia through the Rev. Thomas Weld, who was driven to America by persecution at the hands of Archbishop Laud, and after becoming one of the founders of Harvard College returned to England with his third son Edmund, who afterwards went as Cromwell's chaplain to Ireland, where that elder branch of the Weld family remained till my father took up his abode in London, on his call to the English bar. The latter subsequently became connected with the Royal Society, and wrote what is

still a standard work on its history, as well as many books of travel, several of which publications were illustrated by my mother, who was a talented amateur artist. Alfred Tennyson had great sympathy with the literary pursuits of his brother-in-law, and was a frequent visitor to my parents at Somerset House, Burlington House, and Lansdowne Crescent, Notting Hill, during the period of some twenty years that my father and mother lived in London. We often used to stay in the spring with the Alfred Tennysons at Farringford, and when we went to live at Aubrey House, only just across the water from the Isle of Wight, our intercourse with my aunt and uncle was very frequent. It was naturally rather less so when we moved to Bath, but was closest of all, as far as my mother and myself were concerned, when we took up our abode at Freshwater, but then my father had passed away.

Tennyson constantly consulted my father about his publishing affairs and other matters; for instance, one day my

father received the MS. of "Riflemen Form" enclosed in the following letter:

"I send you the song in its last form. I don't think the *Times* will put it in, but you can try, if you like. Another paper will. To be signed T."

To which epistle my father appends a note. "The lines appeared in the *Times*, Monday, May 9th, 1859; and on Thursday, May 12th, the government sanctioned the formation of volunteer rifle-corps. The lines were copied into a great number of papers."

The fragment of a poem, a fac-simile copy of which faces this page, was given to my father by Tennyson to do what he liked with. He also gave him the MS. of "The Grandmother," which was one of my uncle's favourites among his own poems.

When my father and my uncle were together they were wont to indulge for hours at a time in earnest converse, and among the many subjects they used to discuss were the marvels of science and ancient mythologies, and *à propos* of the

The constant spirit of the world exalts
In fertile change & wide variety
And this is my delight to live & see
All principles still working new results
Nothing is altogether old or new
What's old shines in another form or cast.

But what is human thought is just & true
The fashions in a thousand forms will last
But some high thoughted moods & ments of mind
Can never be remodelled or expunged

Again by any later century
As in the oldest craters o' the earth we find
Enormous fossil bones & shapes impress'd
Of ancient races that have ceased to be

latter subject, Tennyson thus expressed himself to my father: "I do not believe that Woden and Thor are Mars and Jupiter, but in the old unlearned days, when men thought themselves most learned, and knew but little Latin and less Greek, they used to confuse and transubstantiate the classic and barbaric divinities at pleasure." Tennyson always took a great interest in Brittany, and after my father's tour there it formed a frequent topic of conversation. My uncle was somewhat startled to learn that there was a church in that part of France dedicated to Our Lady of Hatred. "That is very singular," he remarked, "your account of Notre Dame de la Haine—how many unconsciously or half-consciously worship in her temple still."

In his correspondence with my father, from which I give a couple of extracts, Tennyson says: "If you write a book on Brittany, I am sure that it will be, as all yours are, pleasant, picturesque, and graceful. The subject is, to me at least, most captivating, but heaven help you if you

intend to dive deeply into Celtic antiquities.

“I received the other day a most flattering letter from Ruskin, touching poor little ‘Maud.’ I am glad that you too find something in her. It is a poem written in an entirely new form, as far as I know. I think that properly to appreciate it you ought to hear the author read it, and this I say not in vanity; but that to give full effect to the long sweeps of metre, you must have a reader who not only reads somewhat dramatically, but who likewise has a full voice and ample lungs.”

On receipt of my father's book on “Brittany,” Tennyson writes: “A thousand thanks for your kindness in sending me your ‘Brittany.’ Very refreshing to me after the almost daily verse-books that are sent. It must be *pessimi poetæ sæcli incommoda*, as Catullus happily calls them.

“I am for free trade in the bookselling question, as in other things; yet I can scarcely think that my opinion is of much value, for I have neither read these dis-

ANNE WELD

From a painting



cussions in the papers on this matter nor have I myself carefully examined it.

"Pity me ; scores of letters to answer, I snatch a moment to say these words to you. I can no more (as people say when they die on the stage). We are both happy in learning that dear little Agnes is recovering [from whooping-cough]. We shall be coming up to town in a day or two. Can you give me a bed ? I must go either to Spedding, or the Camerons, or you, but I should prefer coming to you. Love to Anne and Missie.—Ever yours affectionately,

"A. TENNYSON."

When my uncle stayed in our house in London, I well remember the almost Spartan simplicity of the fare he insisted on our giving him. We knew he liked plain boiled salt beef, but were scarcely prepared for his begging to be allowed to have it (instead of the fresh roasts we had cooked for him) three days running, cold for his dinner. No guest ever gave so little trouble, or was so full of considera-

tion for our servants ; but this was because he was always full of thought for others. A little instance of which comes into my mind, the occasion being a visit my mother and I paid to Farringford when my aunt happened to be away for a few hours. Tennyson came into our room to see if it was all comfortable, and disagreeing with the housemaid, who had thought the weather too warm to light the fire, said, "Oh, this doesn't look half a welcome," and dropping on his knees, lighted it, and fanned it into a bright flame.

I remember, too, my uncle's kind dealings with the many unknown correspondents with whom others might have had scant patience. On one occasion a letter had been following him about for days, and we found, on opening it, that the writer, a young German poet, declared therein his intention of committing suicide, unless a letter from the great English poet, for whom he professed a profound admiration, should reach him before a certain date—and that date was already past. My uncle was a first-rate German scholar, but

he disliked writing in the characters they use in correspondence, so he said, "Sit down at once, Agnes, and write a kind letter to the poor beast;"¹ and his anxiety was great, till he heard again from the German poet, and found that our letter had been in time to save his life.

Tennyson loved to hold communion with the men of other nations by personal intercourse, where possible, and failing this by studying their books. He was much attracted by Amiel's *Journal Intime*, and we worked together one summer at translating it into English. He drew my attention especially to the following passage as describing his own feelings and experiences: "I believe the discipline of those who are to live in the coming age is different from that of any previous one. I can only look at the strange providences in my own life with wonder as to what they were intended to fit me for, some state, as I cannot help thinking, very new

¹ A favourite epithet of compassion with Tennyson.

and surprising, which will need us to have a thorough assurance of our own absolute littleness, and yet of our high calling. I sometimes feel a strong conviction that I have had lessons taught me of the way in which people are nowadays trying to get out of the government of God and establish themselves into gods, losing in the process everything that makes them better than worms."

While rejoicing to trace the pulsations of the great common heart of humanity through all nations and down all the centuries, Tennyson would point out to me the special aspects of truths that were brought out by individual nations at the present day, and still more markedly at certain periods in the world's past history; expressing himself much as he has done in the lines he wrote down for my father—

"Some high-thoughted moods and moulds
of mind

Can never be remodelled or expressed
Again by any later century."

It was topics such as these that my

uncle most dwelt on in the almost daily walks that we took together in my Fresh-water days, and all the more because of late years our homes had lain far apart, and my opportunities of meeting him were rare. Precious beyond measure to me is the memory of those days of my youth, when we used to take cross-country scrambles over hedge and ditch, or ramble together along breezy downs, and when he used to open to me the treasure-house of his mind and heart. Everything we came across interested him, and he could see something to admire even in a raw-boned old hack grazing by the wayside. "You would scarcely call that poor beast beautiful," he exclaimed, "with his ribs almost sticking through his skin, but he is certainly picturesque as he stands shivering on the common, his meagre tail blowing in the wind. It seems to me that the picturesque is generally associated with age, or the commencement of decay; for, take a cottage that when newly built seemed common-place enough, and pull down some of its thatch, then break the

windows, and introduce a baby clad in rags, sprawling across the threshold, and you have at once a picturesque subject for the artist."

Tennyson did not, however, approve of the degree to which some of the Freshwater folk carried this picturesqueness of their homes. There was one such cottage we used to pass in our walks that was inhabited by a family living a half-nomadic life, the aged father habitually clad in a blanket that he wore like a mantle with the air of a noble savage. The parlour could never be entered because its ceiling hung down as a bag, pressing against the door. One of the bedrooms above was turned into a sty, where two pigs passed a very dirty existence, without the ventilation that was afforded to a still more picturesque cottage with which we were acquainted, by the absence of much of the thatch and all the ceiling from its one bedroom. Through its open rafters the wind and rain found free entrance, to the complete unconcern of the owner, who had built the shanty years before and ever

after left it severely alone. This carelessness as to domestic comfort was a heritage of the life of adventure and hardship led by the race of smugglers not yet quite extinct in Freshwater. Just before we left our home there I was informed that during the whole of the fifteen years we had occupied tree-embowered Hawkridge, its grounds had been used as a hiding-place for illicit spirits. This information explained the noises which had awakened and puzzled me in the dead of night--the long-drawn whistle from behind a near pine tree, answered by a confederate from a more distant part of the garden, which was the signal for the shuffling of feet, and the rolling of a heavy body along the ground, followed at one time by a runaway ring at the front door, at another by the tramp of hobnailed boots across our cellar.

In his daily walks on the Downs Tennyson was in the habit of chatting with the coastguards whom he met marching along the path that skirted the edge of the cliffs, and many a tale they

told him of the fierce contests they used to have with the smugglers; but it was difficult to get the latter to tell of their own daring deeds, though my uncle had quite the knack of drawing out the villagers to talk of the auld lang syne. He would smile at their yarns of how one morning the tidings flew through Freshwater that Bonaparte's fleet was in sight, and forthwith most of the able-bodied men, women, and children hied them up to the top of the Beacon Down and ranged themselves in a long line which they still further lengthened by sheep-pens set up on end, hoping that Napoleon would take the whole lot for soldiers, and be thus scared from his purpose of invasion. With the fishermen and their love for a seafaring life my uncle, who was a splendid sailor, had the fullest sympathy, and he quite agreed with them that it was infinitely preferable to "wyverning about atop of dry land," as they expressed the act of travelling by rail.

Frequent were the visits we paid to-

gether to the cottage of Tennyson's old shepherd, and still more frequently did we watch him as he called out by name the various members of his master's flock, and bid us observe, as each answered to its name, how it differed in countenance and expression from its fellows. In their intense love of Nature, animate and inanimate, Shepherd Paul and my uncle were at one, and indeed the latter's sympathy with Nature led him to mourn the cutting down of trees as if they were, like the grove in Dante's *Inferno*, the abode of his personal friends, and specially did he grieve if the axe smote them in summer-time. I well remember his gazing long upon a horse-chestnut that had continued to put forth flowers days after it had been felled to the earth. "Look at it," he said, "stretching out a beseeching arm, and blossoming on, its blooms unfolding in all their beauty, quite unconscious that they can never turn to fruitage. How like they are to some men, who appear blooming outwardly, and think that

they are living whilst they are already dead within."

He scolded me severely, as a child, when he met me trundling along a wheelbarrow that I had filled full of the daffodils I had been picking in Farringford home-park, telling me how wrong it was to waste in that way the good gifts of God, since while I should derive no more enjoyment from these hundreds of plucked blossoms than from half a dozen; if left on their own roots they would have lasted double the time as a joy for many to look upon. Every spring the glory of these "Lent Lilies" that flooded the grass of the park with their golden sunshine was a fresh delight to him, as were the masses of cowslips that succeeded them. He had the artist's eye for form, and would lay an ivy spray by his side, and carve a faithful copy of its graceful outlines; and this design of his, together with an *Agnus Dei*, to which he had taken a great fancy, formed the decorative terra-cotta mouldings round the windows of a model labourer's cottage on his estate,

whose erection he used to superintend daily.¹

Tennyson was by no means blind to the darker side of Nature. "She will never teach men morality," he would say, "and her ravening tooth is a cruel one. Indeed, it was the observed cruelty of Nature that gave rise to the cult of the Khonds, with their human sacrifices. You could not learn to know the higher attributes of God from Nature even with the aid of science." His mind, however, dwelt far less on her discords than on her harmonies, which he wrought into the harmonies of his verse.

He held strongly that scientific truth can never be really at variance with divine truth, but he considered that men are too apt to mistake what they personally hold to be true for the absolute truth. On this account, when I asked him whether he considered the motto "Truth

¹ These designs are copied on the cover of this volume from duplicate mouldings in my possession

against the World " a wise one to be used by people in general, he answered, " No, I don't exactly think that would be a wise motto to be proposed for universal adoption, because if each man were to stick himself up with his own ideas of truth against all the rest of mankind, and blurt out these ideas in the faces of everybody else, each would be a great bore." Yet my uncle thought there were certain great moral truths in which all might agree, and he used to explain to me how he had sought to express these in his " Idylls of the King," though he said that his meaning in these Idylls had not always been fully understood. For instance, that: " The Three Queens " are not faith, hope, and charity; the " Lady of the Lake " is not the church, though she teaches Christianity; and " Arthur " is not the conscience merely, he is the ideal man, the whole man, not the part.

It is surprising how many people still continue to read Tennyson's poetry with their attention so exclusively directed to

the beauty of its form that they entirely ignore the soul within it, for whose sake the casket was so exquisitely wrought, and are thus led to assert that it is as an artist, rather than as a teacher, that Tennyson takes his high rank among the great poets of the 19th century; whereas he assured me that any measure of perfection to which he might seem to have attained as an artist in metre was imperfect compared with the standard he had set before himself, since he felt that the gift of poetry was bestowed on him by his Heavenly Father as "a great trust," that it might be a vehicle in which he was permitted to convey to his fellow-men the message he had received from the Master. He told me that his sense of the divine source of this gift was almost awful to him, since he felt that every word of his should be consecrated to the service of Him who had touched his lips with that fire of Heaven which was to enable him to speak in God's name to his age. So that great as was the delight he felt in the exercise of his

art, the constant realisation of his responsibility so far outweighed to him the joy of production that he was wont to say to me that nothing he had ever written seemed to him to have reached that perfection short of which he must never rest, and that all he could hope was that he had brought men a little nearer to God; for as he sat day by day at the Master's feet with that humility of childhood which he kept to his dying hour, he felt no words of his could ever fully reproduce the messages which had been spoken to his own heart, and yet that he must strive with all his might to clothe them in the best language he could find. And so he sang on all through that long life of his, not that he might receive the homage of his own or future ages as a consummate artist, but as one to whom, all unworthy though he deemed himself, the mission had been entrusted of raising the thoughts of all who should come under his influence to a higher, diviner level—the level to which he himself was ever aspiring.

This sense of the divine mission entrusted to him in no way interfered with — nay, rather enhanced — the perfect naturalness of his life. To try and find out what God had made him to be, and then to resolve to be that very self, and none other, was his constant aim; for his conviction was that only as far as a man is true to himself can he fulfil the purpose of his existence.

I think no man that ever lived came nearer than he did to perfect truthfulness. He was often a martyr to his determination never to say anything that was not strictly and absolutely true; for none could be more sensitive than he was about paining people, and yet he would discard all smooth speeches that would have given pleasure, but would not have been quite sincere, and would just say right out the wholesome, though sometimes unpalatable truth instead, feeling utterly miserable for hours, and sometimes for days afterwards, with the fear that in this moral surgery he had not handled the knife as gently as he might

have done. Unless by his keeping silence the cause of truth would have suffered, he would never mention any matter that might injure a single human being, and he always put the best possible construction upon people's words and actions. I am sure his attitude towards them made them better men and women than they would otherwise have been, for they were ashamed not to be what he showed that he thought them.

He was always far more severe with himself than with others, and would bitterly reproach himself for being brusque in manner to untactful strangers, and for allowing fits of depression to get possession of him at times. In a letter to my father he earnestly warns him to avoid following his example in this latter respect, though after his marriage my uncle found it much easier to shake off these fits of depression than he had done in the days when my mother knew him as one sorely tried by the long deferment of that marriage with her sister which at last brought the "peace of God" into his life.

His deeply affectionate nature caused the death of each of the many friends he survived to leave a scar that never quite healed ; but he was always so anxious to keep sorrowful thoughts out of the hearts of the young that, in the hours when I sat upon his knee listening to all the marvellous fairy-tales of science that he would tell me evening after evening, I little knew the effort it had cost him to be all brightness to me, when his soul was sorrowing for the loss of one dear to him.

In after years he would frequently talk to me about the friends of his youth, especially Arthur Hallam, of whom he spoke as of one who had died but yesterday. He used to dwell much upon his stainless purity and absolute truthfulness ; and this it was which made my uncle feel that the lessons of perfect purity and of utter truthfulness which he strove to teach in the whole cycle of the "Idylls of the King" were not impossible to be put into practice by the sons of men.

My mother remembered Arthur Hallam as a man whose intellectual and moral worth rendered him well worthy of the shrine Tennyson made for him in his "In Memoriam," and she often spoke to me of his striking personal appearance and great charm of manner. In the pencil sketch she took of him that always stood on my uncle's mantel-piece, she has brought out the bony ridge over the eyes which he and Tennyson referred to as "The bar of Michael Angelo."

CHAPTER III

SOME ISLE OF WIGHT FRIENDS OF THE INNER CIRCLE

It was my privilege to know intimately all Tennyson's Isle of Wight friends of the Inner Circle; and in writing of those of them who have crossed the bar to the land beyond the grave I shall begin with Sir John Simeon, to whom my uncle was linked in close bonds of friendship from the early fifties till the May of 1870, when Tennyson immortalised him as one of the three chief friends of his life in those lines entitled "In the Garden at Swainston," in which he eulogises Sir John (whose funeral he had just attended) as "The Prince of Courtesy," and writes of him in a tone which shows that my aunt's words,

“Sir John was a brother to us,” were not too strongly expressed.

When not detained in London by his duties as a member of Parliament, Sir John Simeon lived in his beautiful home at Swainston near Newport, where Tennyson used often to visit him, and still more often the Simeons drove over to stay at Farringford, where I used constantly to meet them, to my great delight, for Sir John Simeon and his eldest daughter Louisa were indeed among the noblest natures God ever created. With both of them Tennyson was able to enjoy the fullest communion of soul, undisturbed by the fact that he entirely differed from them on theological grounds, for, though Sir John and his family were devout Roman Catholics, they were as utterly free from narrow bigotry as my uncle himself, and so they could meet on the common ground of love of the Father in Heaven and the brethren-- for love to God and man was the keynote of the lives of the Simeons as well as of the Alfred Tennysons.

Some faint idea of the kind of friend-

ship that subsisted between the two families may be gathered from the notes which Sir John Simeon's eldest daughter Louisa, then Mrs Richard Ward, wrote down shortly before her death, and from which her family have kindly allowed me to extract the following passages. She writes : " Mr and Mrs Tennyson had been looking for a house, and they found themselves one summer evening on the terrace walk of Farringford, with the rosy sunset lighting up the long line of coast to St Catherine's Point, and the golden-blue sea with its faint rosy line mingling with the rosiness, and they said, 'We will go no further; this must be our home.' " An ideal home it was, ideal in its loveliness, in its wild but beautiful gardens, and more than all, ideal in its calm serenity, the hospitable simplicity, the high thought and utter nobleness of aim and life which the pair brought with them, and which, through the long years of change, of sickness, and of sorrow, of which every home must be the scene, made the atmosphere of Farringford impossible to be forgotten by those

who had the happiness of breathing it." What Mrs Ward notes about the quietness of Farringford in these early days is borne out by Tennyson's writing to my father in 1855: "I don't much wonder at your complaining that you waste your sweetness on the desert air when you write to me: but this time I have had some little excuse. I have been writing letters which must be attended to since I received yours. Then, you know, what have I got to tell you from this place? You would not care to hear about the wild flowers which we gather and anatomise daily, nor to be told that we sit listening to the song of the seamews, and hardly ever see a human face not of our household. But you, in the heart of London society, with something new every day almost occurring, must needs be full of matter to talk or to write of."

Part of the reason for my uncle's not keeping up so active a correspondence as usual with my father was that at that period his thoughts were engaged with "Maud," concerning which poem Mrs

Ward relates the following facts : "The writing and publication of 'Maud' were largely due to my father. Looking through some papers one day at Farringford with his friend, he came upon the exquisite lyric 'O that 'twere possible,' and said, 'Why do you keep those beautiful lines unpublished?' Mr Tennyson told him that it was really intended to belong to a dramatic poem which he had never been able to carry out. My father gave him no peace till he had persuaded him to set about the poem, and not very long after he put 'Maud' into his hands.

"It was about this time that Tennyson gave my father the MS. of 'In Memoriam.' He had often asked him to give him a manuscript poem, and he had put him off, but one day at Swainston he asked my father to reach him a particular book from a shelf in the library, and as he did so, down fell the MS., which Tennyson had put there as a surprise. Never was gift more appreciated by the recipient." Mrs Ward continues : "As I got older I was sometimes allowed to drive over to Far-

ringford with my father, and need I say I looked forward to these as the red-letter days of my life. Not only were the talk and intellectual atmosphere intoxicating to me, but I became passionately attached to Mrs Tennyson. My father was fond of saying of her that she was 'A piece of the finest china, the mould of which had been broken as soon as she was made.' It was not, however, till after my mother's death in 1860 that my real grown-up intimacy with them began, and that Farringford became the almost second home which for many years it was to me.

"During my father's absences in London and elsewhere, I was free to go and stay there as often and for as long as I liked. I used to go for long walks, sometimes alone with Mr Tennyson, sometimes in the company of other guests, of whom Mr Jowett¹ was one of the most frequent. Tennyson in these walks would rise to the

¹ The well known Master of Baliol College, Oxford, one of Tennyson's dearest friends.

highest themes, and thread his way through the deepest speculations till I caught the infection of his mind, and the questions of matter and spirit, and of time and eternity, and such kindred subjects, became to me the burning questions, the supreme interests of life. But however absorbed he might be in earnest talk, his eye and ear were always alive to the natural objects around him. I have heard him stop short in a sentence to listen to a blackbird's song, to watch the sunlight glint on a butterfly's wing, or to examine a field flower at his feet." I cannot resist here interrupting Mrs Ward's notes to illustrate them by telling how, when walking one day with the present Rector of Corfe Castle, along the top of Watcombe Bay—that picturesque little cove dear to Tennyson from a sense of his Lord of the Manorship over it as well as from its own beauty—my uncle stopped suddenly in a line of argument to point out the sunlight gilding to a deeper golden shade the fragile rock-cistus bloom at his feet, and, tenderly plucking the delicate flower, he held it

lovingly in his hand, and, looking up, said, "There is not a flower on all this Down that owes to the sun what I owe to Christ."

Sir John Simeon's daughter continues: "The afternoon walks were followed by the long talks in the firelight by the side of Mrs Tennyson's sofa – talks less eager, less thrilling than those I have recalled; but so helpful, so tender, full of the wisdom of one who has learnt to look upon life, and all it embraces, from one standpoint only, and that the very highest. Then came dinner, seasoned with merry, genial talk, unexpected guests arriving, and always finding the same warm welcome, for none came who were not tried and trusted friends. Afterwards we adjourned to the drawing-room, according to the old college fashion, for the delightful dessert. Mr Tennyson went up after dinner to his little study at the top of the house with any men friends who were staying in the house. They smoked there for an hour or two, and then came down to tea, unless, as sometimes happened, we all joined them upstairs; and then there was more talk.

and reading aloud of published, or, still better, unpublished poems. He would sometimes read from other poets, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, and some lyrics of Campbell being what he often chose, and he taught me to know and appreciate Crabbe, whom he placed very high in the rank of English poets.

“My father’s re-election to parliament in 1865 made our seasons in London longer than they had been. Some glorious days there were, however, when at Easter or at Whitsuntide my father went down to Swainston. We always went over to Farringford either to spend a night or two, or to drive back through the spring night, with its scented breath, and its mad revelry of cuckoos and nightingales vying with each other as to which could outshout the other, and my father, fresh from communion with his friend, would open himself out as he never did at any other time or place.”

As I turned over the leaves of the notes by Sir John Simcon’s daughter, from which I have made the foregoing extracts, I felt

as if standing once more in that upper room of which she writes—the little old study which seemed to me to fit in with my uncle's own simplicity of nature and tastes far better than the big studies which he afterwards built at Farringford and Aldworth. Round three of its sides ran rows of shelves filled with the books he loved, and three tables, a sofa, and two or three chairs completed the simple furniture. Merrily humming, flew in and out of the open casements of the oriel window, swarms of busy bees, nice fat bees they were, too good-natured for the most part to sting, since all through the long summer days they feasted on the nectar of the magnolia flowers which blossomed the whole way up this southern side of Farringford, so that one had but to step out on to the ledge outside this study window to gather the huge white buds, whose fragrance as they opened was well-nigh overpowering, and was imparted almost intact to the pounds of honey the bees stored one year in the part of the roof over this side of the house.

I used to feel a sort of proprietorship in the old study, for if the Tennysons happened to be away from Farringford when we were at Freshwater, my uncle would give me the key of the room ; but I loved it best when I used to go up to it between eleven and twelve to fetch my uncle down for our morning walk together, before starting on which I used to coax him to read to me from the volume which he generally was holding in his hands when I entered, which sometimes consisted of the MS. of his last written poem, and sometimes was a new book of science, history, or philosophy, all of which subjects interested him keenly.

The reading finished, we went down to my aunt in the drawing-room for a few minutes, and then my uncle donned his large, soft felt hat, and we passed out of the breakfast-room on to the broad lawn, across which Tennyson strode with rapid steps into the winding shrubbery path that had been bordered all through the spring with primroses of many hues, self-sown for the most part. Opening the

little wicket gate to which the path led, we passed into the bowery lane and turned down it to the left towards Freshwater Bay, if our first halting-place was to be the picturesque ivy-clad "Dimbola," garlanded to its very roof with roses, where dwelt that unique personality Julia Margaret Cameron, who seemed to be all the famous women of the French salons of the 18th century rolled into one, with an added charm of her own beside. As Sir John Simeon and his eldest daughter were Tennyson's dearest man and girl friends of the Isle of Wight circle, so was Mrs Cameron, whose nature was fully as noble a one as theirs, his dearest woman friend; almost the only woman outside his relations whom he called by her Christian name, and who called him in turn by his. She was a woman of earnest piety and rare intellectual powers, and especially was she the very incarnation of friendship; no trouble was ever too great for her to take to serve or give pleasure to the many she folded to her motherly heart, and when with Mrs Cameron she

made each feel that he or she was the only being in the whole universe for whom this Queen of Friends lived. This rare power was only attained by an utter and exhausting sacrifice of self—a sacrifice which, while it undoubtedly shortened Mrs Cameron's life, made it infinitely better worth living. However busy she might be, if her business was one which could possibly be postponed, she would put it aside if a friend came to her for advice in difficulty, or congratulation in joy, or solace in sorrow. There was no looking past that friend to something or somebody else beyond, but an absolute concentration of mind on to each personal detail, however minute, that might be related. A boundless enthusiasm and an unquenchable optimism enabled her to see and seize upon the best side of people and force them to act up to it, and influence the world for good to a degree of which they had not hitherto thought themselves capable.

She refused to be bound by any of the artificialities of modern society life, and

her complete freedom from affectation was a great refreshment to Tennyson, and even made him bear patiently the many scoldings she gave him for refusing to waste (as he considered) the precious hours of lovely summer mornings in sitting to her for his photograph. Unfortunately for my uncle she had discovered what an immense source of pleasure to her friends her photographs of him were; and still more unfortunately, from his point of view, she had made the further discovery that this pleasure was greatly enhanced when the said photographs were signed with the poet's own autograph. The more he signed, the more she wanted him to sign; and I have really pitied my uncle when she has come flying up to Farringford with such a huge sheaf of her photographs of him that she has had to hire a carriage to bring them, and has plumped them down before him, with a selection of new pens, so that he might not have the excuse of not having a pen handy to sign them with.

Some of Mrs Cameron's photographs

of Tennyson were as successful as were those of her husband, who used to look very patriarchal in his purple caftan, over which flowed his long snowy locks and beard. He had done much active and important work in India, but now led a reposeful existence, absorbed in the classics, of which he had such a thorough mastery that Tennyson loved to discuss them with him.

The Camerons' sons being about the same age as the young Alfred Tennysons were their constant companions, and such was the intimacy between the two families that an introduction from Mrs Cameron was generally an open sesame to the charmed circle of Farringford. I remember witnessing this with a young girl who was paying a short visit to Dimbola, and happened to be looking out of an upper window with Mrs Cameron at the view of the sea which it commanded, when the latter espied a tall figure, in a flowing mantle-like cloak, approaching with rapid strides, and smiling up to her. Instantly she flew out into the garden with both

her arms outstretched to meet and greet her honoured guest, to whom she proudly exhibited the good results she was getting from that last negative of him which occupied a large printing frame on the lawn. Tennyson, who remembered what long sittings it involved, shrugged his shoulders at her suggestions of a new pose, in which she declared she could make a quite Rembrandt-like picture of him that very morning, on which the strongly actinic rays of the spring sunshine would be sure to bring out the very best effects of light and shade. Tennyson was not to be moved by her pleadings, eagerly emphasised by gesticulations with those expressive hands of hers, deeply stained by the chemicals in which she was continually soaking them, for she did every part of the process herself, even to the making of those wet plates of the messiness of which modern photographers with the dry plate have so little idea.

She next urged that if the wayward poet would insist on preferring a walk in the sunshine to making the far better use of it of

letting it immortalise her through him to future ages, he would at all events congratulate her on a capital illustration to one of his poems she had found in a young lady visitor to Freshwater. She picked up a second printing-frame from the lawn, and releasing the catch disclosed the face of the girl who had been leaning with her out of the window, which Tennyson pronounced to be that of a winsome maiden, but not exactly his conception of the particular character to which Mrs Cameron has fitted her. "Well, if you won't sit to me to-day, you must take that girl for a walk," said Julia Margaret in the imperative mood tone, and the poet, glad to grant her a small favour after refusing her a large one, consented at once, and the maiden was beckoned up to at the window out of which she was still leaning. She blushed with awe and shyness as her hostess dragged her forward, and told her she was to put on her hat quickly for a walk with one whom she had hitherto regarded as a being to be almost worshipped for his genius. Before the walk was half over, her

fear of him had vanished, but her reverence was intensified. She was amazed at the vast depth of his learning; amazed, too, at the way he managed to make subjects she had hitherto thought far too abstruse and difficult for her quite easy of comprehension.

He gave her his hand to help her down the steep path into Watcombe Bay, which, as I have said, was his own especial bay of which he was extremely proud, and he showed her all the wealth of minute animal and vegetable life that fills its limpid rock-pools. As they gained the summit of the Beacon Down he brought to her mind's eye a graphic picture of the geological changes that have taken place in the extensive landscape upon which they looked, and then brought her back to the life-history of the tiny mollusc, half-hidden in the short turf upon which they were treading. When after lunch at Farringford she returned to Dimbola, that young girl echoed the remark made to me by the late Dean Wellesley of Windsor, "I honoured Tennyson so highly for his writings that I feared

to know him lest I might be disappointed in him ; but now that I have seen and known your uncle, I can truly say that he himself is higher and greater than the greatest of all the poems he has written."

I am indebted to Mr Hardinge Cameron,¹ the Camerons' eldest surviving son, for writing the following notes on his parents for this chapter ; beginning with his father's verses—

"The English Channel famed in war,
The Solent sea and winding Yar
Have cut an islet, yet not quite
An islet, from the Isle of Wight,
For 'twixt the Channel famed in war
And silent sources of the Yar,
Dry land the twentieth of a mile
Unites it to the parent isle.²
There dwell I, fronting Afton Down,

¹ Who has had a distinguished career in Ceylon.

² In old maps this strip of dry land is absent, and a channel with big ships sailing on it runs all the way from the Solent to Freshwater Bay.

With little Yarmouth for my nearest town,
The little Yarmouth where the Yar
Though hindered by its gathering bar
After four miles of winding reach
At length divides the yellow beach,
And meets in Solent's brine the rills
That southward flow from Hampshire's
hills.

There dwell I, nowise unreprieved,
By those who, loving and beloved,
Think that to them I ought to give
The remnant I have yet to live.
Nor can they cease to wonder why
I let the gusty Solent lie
'Twixt me and them, 'twixt me and all
That men 'The World and Life' do call.
No idle motive hath my will inclined,
But such as well might sway an earnest
mind,
Such as to all may gladly be confessed
To dwell united near the chosen nest,
And hear the Nightingale that sings
unseen
In the dark ilex, on the flow'r'y green
That carpets Farringford's muse-haunted
scene."

“These were the graceful words in which dear old Mr Cameron apologised to his relations and friends for leaving the neighbourhood of London, where his friends for the most part were settled; accepting with sweet unconscious acquiescence the entire responsibility for a step concerning which, to tell the truth, he had hardly been consulted, for it was during his absence, on a visit to Ceylon, that the purchase of his picturesque little home at Freshwater had been planned and concluded by the impulsive spirit that with generous love and irresistible determination administered his household affairs.

“Charles Hay Cameron was a philosopher, a scholar, and a distinguished lawyer, who had done good service to the crown as a Royal Commissioner in Ceylon and as Legal Member of the Supreme Council in Calcutta. For the control of domestic details he had neither aptitude nor inclination, and gladly left their management to his accomplished wife, who, little though either of them knew it,

was perhaps the least business-like of the two. Whatever she undertook, however, she accomplished; and as all her undertakings were inspired by love and carried out with ungrudging generosity, whether they concerned her nearest and dearest, or whether they had in view the health, comfort, or convenience of perfect strangers, it is not to be wondered at that she was generally beloved—as her husband also was for the placid grandeur of his character, as well as for his wisdom and his knowledge. It was a charming sight to see Mr Cameron on a summer morning pacing up and down his lawn—that lawn which his wife (deaf to his asseverations that the little kitchen-garden was quite good enough for his perambulations, and that the expense of making a lawn was not to be thought of) had, with the magic wand of *£ s. d.*, wielded by the hand of energy, caused *in one single night* to take the places of cabbages and scarlet-runners. It was, I say, a charming sight to see him pacing up and down spouting Homer or Theocritus to one of his boys. And if

this sight was charming there was amusement also to be found in the announcement we heard him make in perfect good faith soon after the turf had been laid down, that he had at last induced his wife to sacrifice her kitchen garden, and carry out his long projected plan of constructing a lawn in its place.

“Tennyson’s presence, as I have already indicated, was the attraction which brought the Camerons to Freshwater; as well it might, for to all who knew him the charm of the Laureate’s personality was irresistible. One of the Cameron boys (now holding high office in an Eastern Colony) recited one day to the poet the lines of his father’s which I have quoted. ‘Does he mean me by the Nightingale?’ asked the bard in his deep tones; ‘that’s very good of him.’ It was not lightly that Tennyson valued Mr Cameron’s criticism and praise, for he would bring his new poems and plays down to ‘Dimbola Lodge’ before they were published, and read them aloud, sitting on the end of the bed (for my father, being rather an invalid, got up late),

whilst Mrs Cameron listened from her own arm-chair, and the boys were seated in reverential silence on the floor.

“To estimate the depth of friendship and affection that subsisted between the Tennysons and the Camerons we must turn from these scenes of everyday life, when the poet, invaded by the irrepressible photographer in search of autograph signatures for a bundle of her portraits of him, would say, ‘Julia Cameron, Julia Cameron, you are a dreadful woman’; or when his friend on obtaining some less cordial reception than she desired for some American acquaintance who had gone to Farringford ‘to see the lion,’ would say, ‘Alfred, you are a bear.’ We must turn, I say, from these scenes to the picture of the great poet with large tears in his eyes, gently patting the hand, and comforting the heart, of her whose husband was reported sick unto death in distant Ceylon, and not expected to reach home alive.”

Here Hardinge Cameron lays down his pen, and I take up mine again with the

remark that one reason for Mrs Cameron's immense admiration for Tennyson's character was that she could see for herself how noble his nature was in its utter freedom from literary jealousy and in his frank delight in the greatness of other men ; and in this particular he and Browning ran each other close, for I shall never forget how, when my mother introduced Maud Tennyson and myself to Browning (at our Oxford Masonic *fête*) as Tennyson's nieces, he seized our hands in his, and burst into language of highest praise and deepest affection about his friend who was so dear to him that all that friend's relations must ever be dear to him too. Browning was one of the many famous men who sat successfully to Mrs Cameron, but she did not disdain sitters unknown to fame, if she thought they would make picturesque pictures. For instance, she was one day talking on an interesting subject with the friend who relates that she suddenly broke off the conversation, and rushing away at full speed with extended arms, called out,

“Stop him, stop him ; there goes ‘Time.’” She succeeded in getting the peasant captured, and after a very necessary washing, the shirtless old man was dressed in her best shawls, and duly photographed by her as “Time.”

She once saw her ideal of an ancient Egyptian descending into an Oxford kitchen, and calling on her mistress, who was quite a stranger, persuaded her to spare her cook for several days, in the course of which Mrs Cameron took a truly magnificent photograph of this superb reincarnation of the Greco-Egyptian type. A whole volume might be written about Mrs Cameron’s own beautiful servants, who frequently sat for their portraits. One of them, who had a saintly face, was known in Freshwater as “The Madonna,” so frequently did she appear in photographs of the Holy Family taken by Mrs Cameron on the lines of the old masters. In the romantic marriage of another, brought about through the gentleman’s seeing Mrs Cameron’s photograph of her, the Tennysons were keenly interested, and

she drove from church to Farringford in their carriage as a lovely bride, with her wealth of golden hair hanging down her back.

Mrs Cameron is linked with the Simeons by her fine photograph of Sir John, and by the following passage, written by his daughter concerning Mrs Cameron. "The autumn and winter of 1871-72 my eldest brother [Sir Barrington Simeon] and I spent together at Freshwater. We rented Mrs Cameron's little house, which opens by a door of communication into the large hall of Dimbola, the house in which she lived. The evening we arrived she suddenly appeared in our drawing-room, saying, 'When strangers take this house, I keep the door between us locked—with friends never'; and locked it never was. We lived almost as part of the family, and it was a real enjoyment to be in such close intimacy with one of the most original and at the same time tender-hearted and generous women I have ever known."

Concerning Mrs Cameron's generosity

I may truly endorse Mrs Ward's commendation, and say that all her friends were quite afraid of ever admiring anything belonging to her, for the moment they did so she insisted on making a present of it to them there and then.

Of her tender-heartedness I may adduce as proof that she did all she could to persuade my mother to let her come and nurse me through a severe attack of typhoid fever. She and my mother loved each other almost as sisters, and the following extract from an article written by Mr Scott O'Conner will show that they had much in common :

"Though Mrs Weld's insistence on always being kept in the background has hitherto caused the omission of any mention of her in notices of Lord Tennyson's friends, she was, from the days when they were neighbours in Lincolnshire, one of the nearest of those for whom he had a regard. He appreciated the attraction of her rare nature, and fully agreed with his wife in saying of her that 'There never was a better sister, nor one who was more

a sister to all she could help.' Whilst Mrs Weld remained at Hawkrigde the sisters saw each other almost daily, but in later years she went to live at Oxford, where her house became the rendezvous of much of the best society it had to offer. The learned men whom she gathered round her found refreshment in talking with a woman whose charm of personality and fresh marvellous bright flow of happiness were among the least elements in her refined and beautiful character. She attracted to her side many to whom 'society' in its ordinary forms was irksome, and she had the rare gift of bringing out in each mind with which she came into contact the very best and the particular best it had to offer. 'To know her,' said one who spoke from the fulness of knowledge, 'was to love her, for hers was a rare nature. She was full of intuitions, of beautiful thoughts, of graceful kindnesses, and of tender ways.'

" 'She was admired,' says another, 'not only for her talents but still more for her goodness, for she was one of the most

perfectly generous and unselfish women that ever lived.' ”

For the sake of the love Mrs Cameron bore the Alfred Tennysons and my mother, when “Julia Margaret” went on her last journey to join her sons in Ceylon, she commended to us all for a double portion of the love we had already bestowed upon them, her beautiful and charming sister Sara, and the latter’s husband, Thoby Prinsep. Tennyson had stayed with the Prinseps years before at their picturesquely countrified London abode, “Little Holland House,” long since swept away by the advancing tide of bricks and mortar. It was a rambling house, with a thatched porch opening on to smooth green lawns, where witty women and learned men held contests of intellect on summer Sunday afternoons, under Mrs Prinsep’s skilled and gentle guidance. With them dwelt then Mr Watts, the famous painter, but though the Freshwater home also was his as much as theirs, I will not dilate on his friendship with Tennyson, as I am confining myself

to writing of his Isle of Wight friends who are dead.

Our way to the Prinseps' led in exactly the opposite direction to that which took us to the Camerons. We first turned into the walled kitchen-garden, made beautiful nearly all the year round by the wealth of old-fashioned flowers, glorious in colouring and rich in fragrance that bordered its paths, and by the great rosemary bushes that Tennyson would rub through his fingers as he passed, quoting to me one day as he did so, the old folks' saying that "Where rosemary flourishes, there the woman of the house bears rule," and adding, that if all women bore rule as his wife did, he could wish every garden in the land to be filled with rosemary. We generally went round to look up the horses and dogs, and often lingered in the farmyard to watch the poultry. As an irate turkey-cock charged down upon us in full sail, my uncle exclaimed, "There, now, Agnes, don't you see what I meant yesterday afternoon, when I told you I could hear your proud wing-feathers

grating along the ground. It was that bird I had in my mind."

From the farmyard we turned into the lane, which my uncle told me was shunned at night by some of the more superstitious villagers, one youth having shortly before fled up it, panting out breathlessly, when he reached the shelter of a house, that the headless ghost (supposed to haunt this lane) had pursued him, and that he had seen it plainly, though all he really saw was a grey mare's tail waving in the moonlight. Ghost stories interested Tennyson, but his was a critical and practical just as much as it was a poetical nature, and these stories could seldom stand against his keen sifting of evidence.

Passing between the well-grown trees that had apparently once formed the avenue of approach to a former Farringford, the summer breezes wafted to us the scent of the hedges of sweet-brier from which the Prinseps' Freshwater abode of "The Briery" took its name. At The Briery Tennyson was ever the thrice-welcome guest, and almost daily did he go for

a chat with "Uncle Thoby," as we all called grand old Thoby Prinsep, who had all the mien and manner befitting the post of Director of the East India Company, which he held so long.

Though the eyesight had failed which had enabled Mr Prinsep, when he first went to India, to gain a prize for learning Persian in five months, yet his mind was full of vigour, and he could converse by the hour with my uncle on politics, literature, science, or theology, for his ready grasp of almost every imaginable subject was only less wonderful than his marvellous memory.

Tennyson took delight in reading aloud to him the interesting letters which every mail brought him from his artist son, Val Prinsep, whilst the latter was engaged on his large painting of the "Proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India."

A little side gate led from The Briery garden into "Love Lane," which is just like a Devonshire lane in miniature, and leads into a succession of fields, along which Tennyson used to walk to Glen Headon,

so called from that bit of the Highlands of Scotland transplanted, as it were, to the Isle of Wight, which was named Headdon Hill, and at whose foot Glen Headdon lay overlooking Totland Bay. Here dwelt the father and mother of the well-known judge, Lord Bowen, and of his still better known brother E. E. Bowen of Harrow, who used to be constantly at Farringford when he came down for the vacations, and whose spirited songs Tennyson thought decidedly above the average, and used to find their talented writer a congenial companion.

Buckle, in his work on *Civilisation*, remarks that clever men are always found to have clever mothers, and this was the case with Lord Bowen and his brother. My uncle loved to hear Mrs Bowen tell the story of her parents, which I will try to relate just as she told it to him.

“My grandfather,” she said, “was a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, who, while riding a white horse at the Siege of Antwerp, was mistaken by the enemy for the Duke of York, and killed under that mistake. In consequence of this, the

English government offered the widow a pension, and she came to live in Bath with her two daughters, both of tender age. Before long, however, it was rumoured that a handsome young cavalry officer, Sir Richard Steele by name, was paying his addresses to the eldest daughter, but that, as she was only sixteen, it would probably be a long engagement. To the amazement of everybody, it was the youngest sister to whom Sir Richard proposed, and whom he married before she was fourteen. As, immediately after the wedding, he was called to serve in putting down the Irish rebellion, his bride and her mother went with him to Ireland, and a fearfully anxious time those women had of it while he was out all day at his dangerous duty. On one occasion he was at the head of a squadron which he was about to lead across a broad ditch, when the soldiers, perceiving the ditch to be bristling with the glistening steel of the rebel pikemen, drew back. 'Are you afraid? Follow me, my men,' shouted Sir Richard, setting spurs to his horse,

but the animal reared and threw the brave young officer, who was impaled on one of the pikes. Hour after hour waited the bride and the mother, straining their ears to catch every challenge exchanged by the pickets who met close to the house they occupied. At last there came the challenge, 'Who goes there?' and the answer, 'Sir Richard Steele—dead'; and in upon a litter was borne to them the pallid form of him they loved. A consultation of doctors was held. Some said, 'He is quite dead'; others, 'No, not quite, but when the pike is drawn out the last spark of life will be quenched with the flow of blood.' However, as it was of no use to bury him with the pike sticking in him, it was pulled out, and he lived to see many fair children born to him, the first when his wife was only fifteen. Though Lady Steele was such a young mother that she was playing with her first-born in an arbour when it was but two days old, yet she became a staid and dignified matron ere her children reached their teens."

Although Mr Bowen had no such romances to narrate of his own family history, yet he used to interest my uncle immensely by the many thrilling episodes he had to tell of scenes in his clerical life which began in a curacy among wild Irish folk.

They once attempted to stop a funeral which Mr Bowen was conducting by trying to push him into the open grave. Seeing that while there were dozens thrusting him hard from behind, there was but one antagonist across the trench (though he was a very Hercules for strength), Mr Bowen sprang across the grave, and seizing that one man unexpectedly, held him tight till he had finished the service.

As senior curate of Bath Abbey, Mr Bowen had to cope with the Chartists, who tried to gain possession of that building, but his most interesting experiences were those gained as the East London Rector of a parish, down some of whose streets, when he first entered on his cure, no respectable person dared go without

the escort of a policeman, but which same streets were traversed in perfect safety by young ladies unattended after Mr Bowen's ministry had worked its miracles of love. The rector's strong sense of Irish humour helped him in his difficult task, and made the retrospect thereof amusing to others as well as to himself. My uncle used to laugh as Mr Bowen told how his curate, being asked how he had got on at his first service in the mission-room the rector had lately built, said, "Oh, all right, till I got into the pulpit, when two men took off their coats and began fighting, and the rest of the congregation formed a ring round them till they had finished, when they put their coats on again, and all resumed their seats and listened quite quietly to my sermon."

Despite his great age, Mr Bowen used to perform the service most impressively at the Totland Church which he was the means of having erected.

In this undertaking he had the hearty support of another of Tennyson's intimate

friends, Charles Pritchard, a clergyman, afterwards well known as Professor of Astronomy at Oxford. My uncle greatly missed the Pritchards when they left Freshwater, for in the earnest, intensely devout, simple-minded man of science he found a nature much akin in many respects to his own. As in earlier days, when headmaster of that school at Clapham, where he gave to so many boys that power of thinking and acting for themselves which made them famous men in after life, so at Freshwater and Oxford Professor Pritchard possessed the rare gift of gaining a thorough knowledge of the most abstruse branches of science and of the latest scientific discoveries, and then imparting that knowledge in so graphic and lucid a form that it seemed positively easy.

Well do I remember his bringing his microscope to Farringford, and showing my uncle some recent deep-sea dredgings by polarised light. Tennyson and he used to work together at astronomy and geology, and to them both the study of Nature ever led them up and on to Nature's God.

Professor Pritchard told me how struck he was with my uncle's manner one day when a scientific man was arguing against religion. "T . . .," said the Laureate, bringing down his fist with tremendous force on the table at which they were sitting, "there *is* a God."

The road that led from Farringford to the Pritchards' house passed at the foot of the hill on which HawkrIDGE, our own house, was built. From the field at the south side of HawkrIDGE to Weston Manor House, on the opposite hill, wound a special gravel path, made for his own use by the squire of Weston Manor, Mr W. G. Ward, known to a former generation as "The Ideal Ward," because of his book on *The Ideal of a Christian Church*, which caused him the loss of his fellowship at Oxford, owing to its leanings to that Roman Catholicism which he afterwards embraced. He was at one time President of the Metaphysical Society, of which Tennyson was a member, and in whose formation Professor Pritchard had a share, and both men were equally

ardent students of philosophy, and had in common a perfectly guileless child-like nature. The mixture of the dreamy student and the hearty friend in Mr Ward was very amusing, for his carriage had generally half passed by before he discovered that a lady had bowed to him, and then he would spring up, as if shot, turn right round, and bow effusively, hat in hand.

Like Tennyson, he would tell you the truth straight out. "Mrs Weld," he said to my mother one day, "your house is so excessively ugly on the side I look upon, that you must let me plant a row of trees in my adjoining field to block out the view of it."

We prided ourselves on the beauty of our heavy stone-mullioned oriel windows to the front, but were quite ready to acquiesce in the ugliness of the kitchen side to which he had alluded, since we specially wanted trees as a shelter from the prevailing south-west winds. But at Freshwater Mr Ward certainly did not set the example of having many trees in his own grounds, for in his Cowes home he had been

set against groves and shrubberies, because of the crowds of nightingales which they harboured and which used to come so close to his windows that he could not sleep for their loud singing. He told my uncle, to the latter's intense horror, that he used to offer a prize of a guinea for every nightingale's head that was brought to him, though, in other matters, Mr Ward was one of the kindest-hearted of men.

Mr Ward's Lord of the Manorship joined my uncle's on the Down, a little to the west of The Beacon, near a spot where the heather began to grow, which heather sometimes served for a turning-point in Tennyson's walks, because, as he used to say to me, "I must have something to turn back at, if that something be but a shadow."

The Beacon Down was always the favourite walk; there was such a sense of freedom about its craggy heights echoing the "wild sea laughter" of the gulls and other cliff-nesting birds. My uncle and I used sometimes to race each other down its steep slippery landward slopes of turf,

entering Farringford by "Maiden's Croft," so called from the times when the demesne was a Priory dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Here Tennyson spent much of his time writing his poems in the picturesque summer-house he decorated with his own hands. Seeing one of the MS. books which my aunt used to bind for my uncle to write in, lying one day upon its table, I began to read it. "My wife would never have dared to do that," said Tennyson, but I think he was more amused than vexed, as he was with the tourists who used to steal his quill pens from this summer-house and leave the moultings of some barn-door fowl instead.

If we had a friend with us, Tennyson would pause to point out the lovely view the Croft commands of the long undulating ranges of the Beacon and Afton Downs and the lake-like expanse of Freshwater Bay, its Mediterranean blue waters chequered with streaks of rosy pink, bordered by white and red-coloured cliffs, which latter at times gleam like some tropical flower as they stretch out towards

the headland of St Catherine's Point. Not far from the spot where we were standing, my uncle said, was located the scene of the legend the Freshwater villagers used to tell of how in some part of the extensive Priory grounds the entrance might be seen to an underground passage which ran under the sea to France and where a vast hoard of priceless treasure was concealed. But woe worth the mortal who, from motives of cupidity or curiosity, attempted to fathom its dark recesses, for a huge bird of sable hue arose to bar his progress, and flapped its bat-like wings over him, when he sank down to rise no more, or if his life were spared, the adventurer who had entered the dusky labyrinth in the prime of life, emerged, grey and wrinkled, with just enough strength left to gasp out his tale of horror and warning ere he expired.

Out of Maiden's Croft a little gate leads into the Wilderness—a small grove, carpeted in spring with daffodils and primroses, and leading to a rustic bridge across Farringford Lane, which bridge

gives access to the oval lawn where Tennyson loved to gather his family and friends (in which latter category he included his favourite dogs) around him for tea on summer afternoons, the murmur of the bees around the great linden tree which shadows it making music in their ears. Choice evergreens grow around it, and here flourishes the "Alexandrian" or "Poet's laurel" (really a kind of *Ruscus*), used in classical times for making wreaths to crown the victors with in the Greek contests, as my uncle told me when he gave me a slip from it. Little did I think, as I tended its early growth, that it was destined to furnish its wealth of glossy dark green sprays to be laid as a crown on the grave of him who had given me the treasured slip.

CHAPTER IV

TALKS WITH TENNYSON

THE East exercised a strong fascination over Tennyson, and he greatly envied my mother and myself for having visited the Holy Land and Egypt. Though I always read all I could get hold of relating to the archæology of the latter country, yet I generally found that my uncle was better up in the subject of the most recent excavations than I was. He was also keenly interested in Abyssinia, owing to having seen so much of Captain Speedy and his charge, the young Prince Alama-you, when they resided at Freshwater. The youth inherited the proud bearing of his mother, who, being seated reading the Psalms, when King Theodore entered her

apartment, refused to rise, saying, "I am communing with a greater monarch than thou." My uncle was much struck with a remark the Prince made. "There's one thing I don't like in England. We Abyssinians look angry at a man when we hate him, but you English smile at people while you are hating them. You don't speak the truth with your faces." "He is quite right," said Tennyson; "there are some people who even kiss to disguise their hatred. The deeper the hate with such folks, the heartier the kiss."

My uncle disliked an over display of demonstration in public, and said that in his experience, "When young married people keep on publicly raining 'my dears' thick upon each other, it is a sure sign that a quarrel is at hand." Akin to this hatred of an unreal show of affection was my uncle's dislike to the fulsome flattery and general vapidness of many after-dinner speeches, and he declared to me that, if called on to make a speech when he felt he had really nothing to say, he should just rise and exclaim—

“Out of my latitude, as I live,
Therefore no platitude—pray forgive,”

and promptly resume his seat.

Even more interesting to my uncle than Prince Alamayou was Queen Emma of the Sandwich Islands, and Mr and Mrs Hoapili, who accompanied her as his guests. The latter looked a thorough Polynesian as she squatted on the floor, her glossy black hair wreathed with the wild bryony berries my cousins and I had gathered for her; swaying her lithe form to and fro in cadence with the wild melodies of her native Hawaii, that she and her husband sang together, bringing so much pathos into their rendering of the ode on the young Prince who had died that his mother burst into passionate weeping. It seemed to us that the choosing of this poem for chanting in the presence of others before the bereaved parent was just as tactless as the choice by a lady for recitation before my aunt and uncle of the latter's poem of “The Grandmother,” with its reference to the

LADY TENNYSON

*From a miniature
by Violet Baker*



boy that "was dead before he was born," as was Tennyson's own eldest son, whom he spoke of to me as "a glorious babe." Great as was his grief at the time of that loss my uncle was able to write to my mother that it was "well---God orders all." And even so when his own time came, and he was told he was about to die, he was able again to say, with the confidence of one who still believed, as he had done through all the years between, that God's ordering was ever for the best—"that is well." And thus he was enabled out of his own greatest sorrows to bring consolation to his fellow-men. I know of a man who, feeling his utter loneliness in a distant colony quite intolerable after the death of his wife, was going in search of the weapon with which he had decided to put an end to his existence, when he came across a copy of the "In Memoriam" which he had taken out with him, and opening its pages, at first half-mechanically, he became interested, and read on and on, till there stole into his soul a peace that never afterwards left it, and he resolved

once more to face the battle of life—a battle he has not fought in vain.

My uncle questioned Queen Emma much on the vegetation of the tropics, which he would have certainly gone to see with his own eyes but for the long absence it would have entailed from my aunt, who was not strong enough to accept the invitation Queen Emma gave us all to visit her in her Islands.

My uncle used to quote, as a great consolation to stay at home, the saying of one who had spent years in the tropics, that there was nothing there to compare to his mind in beauty with an English field of buttercups. "And we can have much of the glory of the tropics in our own gardens," Tennyson would add, as he gazed with admiration at the rhododendron trees—one sheet of purple bloom—that adorned the garden of Aubrey, my father's Hampshire home, to which my uncle and cousins would come over in open boats, in response to our invitation sent by the mirror-signals we children worked between our respective houses, which were only four miles distant from each other as the crow flies.

Close as was our intercourse in those days, Tennyson wished it to be still more close when my mother and I were left alone by the death of my father and grandfather, and pleading as a reason that he was my guardian as well as my uncle, he urged us to make our home with him and his wife. When we finally decided to build ourselves a house a mile from Farringford, my uncle took the greatest interest in its erection,¹ and in the turning of the land around it from a corn-field into a grove of trees, from amid whose branches the nightingales held converse with us. Tennyson was much interested by the way in which they would burst into song the moment we opened our avenue gate, and would change the bar with which they opened to another part of their melody, if we sang or whistled that to them; but if a stranger entered with us, they would remain perfectly mute.

¹ Making us a gift from his own quarries of the ironstone with which it was built.

Whilst I lived at our Freshwater home, my uncle and I used to take it in turns to call and fetch each other for the almost daily walk together in which we were sometimes accompanied by some friend, and now and then by my eldest cousin, the present Lord Tennyson. His brother Lionel had left home for his work in life at the India Office, but he used to come on occasional visits with his wife¹ (niece of Dean and Lady Augusta Stanley, and daughter of Frederick Locker, the well known poet), who had been a great friend of mine when we were young girls, and she and I stayed together at Farringford.

"Why don't you marry, Agnes," Lionel said to me one day, "that you may know what perfect happiness is, as I do now?" Only a few brief years afterwards his young life was cut short by jungle fever ere he could rise to that distinction we all felt sure his talents would have won for him.

When my mother and I were sitting with Tennyson in his study at Aldworth,

¹ Now the wife of Augustine Birrell.

a fortnight before his death, he dwelt much on this son Lionel in his early days, the days in which I recollect him so plainly, his golden hair blowing in the breezes of the Downs, along which he and his brother loved to draw my aunt in her tiny carriage; and right careful little ponies they made, though they frisked along at a brisk pace. Of his whole career his father wrote that his was—

“A soul that watch’d from earliest youth,
And on thro’ many a brightening year
Had never swerved for craft or fear,
By one side path, from simple truth.”

One of Lionel’s main characteristics was faithfulness to his friends. He seemed an embodiment of his own lines on “Sympathy”—lines which show that he had a decided poetic gift—

“In this sad world, where mortals must
Be almost strangers,
Should we not turn to those we trust,
To save us from its dangers ?

“God wills that we have sorrow here,
And we will share it;
Whisper thy sorrow in mine ear,
That I may also bear it.
If anywhere our trouble seem
To find an end,
’Tis in the fairy-land of dreams,
Or with a friend.”

On Lionel Tennyson’s scenotaph in Freshwater church are graven his father’s words —

“Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshippt,
being true as he was brave,
Good, for Good is Good, he follow’d,
yet he look’d beyond the grave.”

My uncle and aunt never really quite got over this beloved son’s premature death in the Red Sea, though their only surviving son exerted himself more than ever to be all in all to them both, sacrificing during their lifetime the independent career of himself and his wife, and merging his individuality in theirs. This unselfishness of the present Lord Tennyson won for him, however, from both his

parents a love as deep as he gave to them, and his career, since their death, has been the richer for his filial devotion.

If I saw how nearly perfect the love between child and parent could be, I saw too at Farringford how still more perfect could be the love between husband and wife. Long had been the time my uncle had waited for his betrothed, but "All things come to him who waits," says the old proverb, and it generally comes true to him whose waiting is a prayerful one, as Alfred Tennyson's was. For he was pre-eminently a man of prayer, and, as he told me shortly before his death, never had one earnest prayer of his failed to receive an answer. And so at last (to quote once more his own words on the subject), "The peace of God" came into his life before the altar to which he led my aunt Emily as his bride. And this peace of God never left their hearth and home, for their wedded life was daily consecrated to their joint service of the Father in heaven and the brethren on earth.

Like her husband, and like our mutual

friend Mrs Cameron, my aunt seemed able to give the whole wealth of her affection to her own immediate family, whilst lavishing her love at the same time on my mother and myself, and on all her own and her husband's relations and friends. It was this capacity for loving which, by making her a blessing to all around her, blessed her in return and enabled her to write in one of her last letters to my mother, "I have had so wonderfully much in life of happiness, that I feel somewhat overwhelmed by the thought." Idolised by her husband and by her children and grandchildren (who were the pride and delight of their parents and grandparents), and chosen of God to do many a great work for Him, no wonder this happiness constantly glowed in her face, and specially did it light it up when she and her husband partook together of the Holy Communion. To this rite my uncle attached a very high value, and he would often dwell in his talks with me upon the special nearness of Christ to him in this sacrament,

but the manner thereof, he said, was far too sacred to be expressed in words. His reverence for all the services of the Church was so great that I well remember how vexed he was with me one Sunday when, deluges of rain having prevented our going to church, he found me mounted behind an extemporised reading - desk, engaged (quite solemnly as it seemed to my childish mind) in acting as clergyman to a congregation of children younger than myself.

The determination never to seem other than he was brought with it the absolute unworldliness that was such a marked characteristic of the life and teaching of Tennyson. In reading his correspondence with Queen Victoria (which she kindly allowed my cousin to incorporate in the life of his father) we see how grateful she is to him for having valued her true woman's heart more than her royal state; and his many friends among the great ones of the earth all knew they owed my uncle's friendship with them to what they were in themselves, and not to the outward trappings of their rank. He was

just as ready to make friends with those in an obscure station as in a lofty one, and once he had proved their worth, they were always sure of the same hearty recognition, no matter when or where he might meet them again.

In the course of his long life he was occasionally obliged to hold intercourse with people who would be generally considered commonplace, but they quite ceased to be commonplace when he took them in hand, for he held that everybody is interesting, if you could only get at him in the right way; and he had a marvellous intuition for finding out that right way. It might have been said of him (as it was of our aunt, Sir John Franklin's widow) that the dullest people, when in his company, became aware of depths in their nature that they had never before suspected; for he knew how to bring out the very best that was in them, and in the deep humility of his nature he would so treat them that he made them feel he was the learner, and they the teachers. It was just because he was to the end the patient

listener, the earnest inquirer, the teachable-minded, ever ready to learn from the humblest of God's creatures, that he has been able to leave the world such a precious legacy in the teachings of his life and writings.

There was one incident in his life that my uncle knew had often been misunderstood, and he most solemnly laid upon me the charge that I, who, he said, could best undertake the task, should let all the world know "how great a sacrifice" (these were his very words, uttered in a tone of intense earnestness) he had practised in yielding to Mr Gladstone's pressing entreaties that he should take the peerage. Having, however, once accepted it, he was most anxious to fulfil aright the new duties which it involved. He became doubly fearful lest his shortsightedness should be mistaken for haughtiness.

"Now that I am Lord Tennyson," he said to me, "you must be sure and tell me of any one meeting us in the road whom I ought to salute, because they might feel more hurt than before if I took no notice of them."

Tennyson considered worldliness one of the most besetting sins of the age, and one harder to root out than untruthfulness and impurity, because while none could harbour those sins without their presence betraying itself, worldliness could exist unsuspected until it had poisoned the whole nature, unless a constant watch were kept over the motives of every action. My uncle believed the study of nature, in a scientific spirit, to be a great antidote to worldliness, as showing the individual his true position in the universe ; for, as he said to me, "When I think of the mighty worlds around us, to which ours is but a speck, I feel what poor little worms we are, and ask myself, 'What is greatness?'" A still more potent antidote (as Tennyson has pointed out in "Lady Clara Vere de Vere" and "The Palace of Art") is the self-sacrificing service to one's fellow-creatures, and he told me that so highly did he esteem such service that his idea of heaven was "to be engaged in perpetual ministry to souls in this and other worlds": and pointing one

evening to the myriads of stars shining above us, he said to a friend, "Can some of these 'other sheep' of whom Christ speaks be the dwellers in those distant worlds we are now gazing upon?" He went on to tell me how he felt that "We shall have much to learn in a future world, and so shall all be children to begin with when we get to heaven, whatever our age when we die, and shall grow on there from childhood to the prime of life, at which we shall remain for ever."

My uncle was careful to distinguish these his own personal opinions about heaven, and also his personal opinions on home and foreign politics, from the message with which he believed himself intrusted by the Most High concerning the great eternal verities of morals and of faith in a divine providence. In his desire to foster the smallest spark of belief in the breast of the perplexed seeker after truth, Tennyson has used expressions of encouragement which were wrested by some into statements of his own views, till the publication of his son's biography of him,

and that of the reminiscences of those to whom he spoke openly of his religious attitude, showed the world that his faith was by no means a vague and colourless one. He often spoke to me of the actuality of Christ's presence to him in the Holy Communion—a presence which he considered the divinity of our Lord alone rendered possible. He dwelt much on the grandeur of the title *the Son of Man*. "We are all sons of God," he was wont to say, "but one alone is worthy to be called *the Son of Man*, the representative of the whole of humanity. That, to my mind, is the diviner title of the two, for none dare apply to himself this title save Christ, as thus representing the whole human race."

My uncle considered the freedom of the human will and the starry heavens as the two greatest marvels that come under our observation, and wonderful did it seem to him that the whole of these heavens are retained upon the retina of the eye; in the thought of this he was no less overwhelmed with awe than when he realised that, in a space of the sky that looked

smaller than the palm of the hand, there are 60,000 suns. As he gazed on these from the platform on the roof of Farringford, whither he often resorted on fine nights, he would say, "I do not like such a word as design to be applied to the Creator of all these worlds; it makes Him seem a mere artificer. A certain amount of anthropomorphism must, however, necessarily enter into our conception of God, because though there may be infinitely higher beings than ourselves in the worlds beyond ours, yet, to our conception, man is the highest form of being. E says there is something higher than God. If there be, then it must be God. Whatever is the highest of all must be the Deity, call it by what name you will. Matter, time, and space are all illusions, but above and beyond them all is God, who is no illusion. Time has no absolute existence, and we can as little conceive of space being finite as of its being infinite. We can really understand the existence of spirit much better than that of matter, which is to me far more incomprehensible

than spirit. We see nothing as it really is, not even our fellow-creatures."

My uncle always seemed to like best to talk about spiritual matters, and few have ever been more earnest students of the Bible, or more impressive readers thereof. It used to be a treat to me to hear him recite one of his own poems, in that grand sonorous voice of his, but it was a still greater delight to listen to his reading of a chapter of Isaiah, for then so thoroughly did he send his whole soul forth with his words that one was reminded of Bunsen's remark on F. D. Maurice's reading of the Church Service, "Such reading is in itself a sermon." He could not find words strong enough to express his love of and reverence for the sacred volume; and when his picture of old age, in the "Ancient Sage," was said to be like that in Ecclesiastes, "I only wish it were," he replied. "I never could equal that description." Yet surely the sublime poem just mentioned is well worthy to have been written by the author of Ecclesiastes, and it must be studied attentively by all who

desire to enter into the mind of Tennyson, for, from what he used to tell me when thinking it into being, I can testify what a deep insight it gives into his own views.

“It is just what I should have believed if I had lived, as I make my Ancient Sage do.

‘A thousand summers ere the time of Christ,’”

he said to me, “but to get at my present belief you must add on Christianity.”

How like a clarion his voice rang forth as he read me, the day after he had written them, those lines in it which are a very gospel of hopefulness—

“Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
And cling to Faith beyond the forms of
Faith!

She reels not in the storm of warring
words,

She brightens at the clash of ‘Yes’ and
‘No,’

She sees the Best that glimmers thro’
the Worst,

She feels the Sun is hid but for a night,

She spies the Summer thro' the Winter
bud,
She tastes the fruit before the blossom
falls,
She hears the lark within the songless
egg,
She finds the fountain where they wail'd
'Mirage' !"

I once asked my uncle whether he agreed with Bacon's dictum that Pilate's question, "What is Truth?" was put jestingly. "No," he unhesitatingly answered, "it was in no spirit of jesting he uttered those words. They may have been accompanied with a shrug of the shoulder, and spoken in a cynical tone, but I believe rather that they were wrung from the depths of a heart that had learnt that there was no truth in the religious systems then in vogue, and knew not where to seek it. Alas! that we should hear this cry repeated in our own age, and that men should fail to find their souls craving for truth satisfied by Christianity. The great spread of agnosticism and unbelief of all

kinds seems to me to show that there is an evil time close at hand. Sometimes I feel as if it would not surprise me to see all things perish. I firmly believe that if God were to withdraw Himself from the world around us and from within us, for but one instant, every atom of the creation, both animate and inanimate, would come utterly to nought, for in Him alone do all beings and things exist. Wherever life is, there God is, specially in the life of man. I believe that beside our material body we possess an immaterial body, something like what the ancient Egyptians called the Ka. I do not care to make distinctions between the soul and the spirit as men did in days of old, though perhaps the spirit is the best word to use of our higher nature, that nature which I believe to have been in Christ truly divine, the very presence of the Father, the one only God, dwelling in the perfect man. Though nothing is such a distress of soul to me as to have this divinity of Christ assailed, yet I feel we must never lose sight of the Unity of the Godhead,

the Three Persons of the Trinity being like three candles giving together one light. I love that hymn, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,' and should like to write such a one." As Tennyson spoke these words we were just descending from the summit of the lofty Down then crowned by the Beacon whence it derived its name. The historical associations of this picturesque landmark, inherited by it through a line of ancestors, of which it was the exact facsimile, were a great source of interest to Tennyson. I could have wished that the cross now taking its place on the Down above Freshwater had been erected elsewhere, so as to leave intact the familiar outlines of that beacon whose dark form, looming mysteriously through the mist, often seemed to us like some living being. No memorial could be more appropriate than this would have been to Tennyson, whose whole life was a striving to be the beacon that he felt God had destined him to become to the storm-tossed mariners on the sea of life. If I ever reach the heavenly haven beyond the

grave it will be largely because my uncle's beacon-light showed me the way. Nothing that others ever spoke to me, and nothing I ever read, even in the pages of the Bible, ever made the impression upon me that his words and manner did when he would say to me, in exactly the same natural way as a child would express his delight at his father making him his companion: "God is with us now on this Down, as we two are walking together, just as truly as Christ was with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus: we cannot see Him, but He, the Father, and the Saviour, and the Spirit, are nearer perhaps now than then to those that are not afraid to believe the words of the Apostles about the actual and real presence of God and His Christ with all who yearn for it."

I said I thought such a near actual presence would be awful to most people. "Surely the love of God takes away and makes us forget all our fear," he answered. "I should be sorely afraid to live my life without God's presence; but to feel He is by my side now just as much as you

are, that is the very joy of my heart.”
And I looked on Tennyson as he spoke,
and the glory of God rested upon his face,
and I felt that the Presence of the Most
High had indeed overshadowed him.

APPENDIX

THE BLIZZARD
AND
BRONCHO DAYS

BY THE LATE
BERTRAM TENNYSON

APPENDIX

BERTRAM TENNYSON was a sailor, a soldier, and a barrister, besides being something of a poet and an artist. He was a man who loved ease and luxury, and yet could lead cheerfully the hardest life. He was an affectionate son and brother, a good comrade, a lover of nature and the country, of children and of animals—an altogether lovable man. His love of adventure was fostered by the reading of Walter Scott's novels, which, when he was eleven years old, he used to save up his weekly pennies to buy in six-penny editions. When enough had been saved to buy another precious volume, and after it had been read, he and his sister, Maud, generally chose out certain characters from it, and played them in the garden, throwing much vigour into their impersonations.

He was educated for the navy, which

he entered at an early age. His first voyage was to a very unhealthy station on the West Coast of Africa, where he was taken ill of yellow fever. This gave him a distaste for his profession, which was moreover most uncongenial to him from its monotony. The tales his father¹ used to tell of his own life of adventure in Tasmania inspired Bertram with a longing for the life of a colonist, and induced him to go out to Manitoba to try his luck at farming; but when he got there he found he had not enough capital to be a successful farmer, so took to driving a coach and breaking in horses, and acting as a pioneer in helping to explore and open up the Far West. He and a friend lived for all one winter in a hole in the ground, at a spot where the cold was so intense that if you threw water into the air it descended in the form of icicles, and if you put your bare hand on a bar of iron it blistered your palm. He hunted a

¹ Horatio, Tennyson's youngest brother.
See chapter i. pp. 26-29.

great deal, and was such a good shot that he was able to do splendid service as a scout in the North-West Territory Rebellion War. He had many narrow escapes, but the dreadful hardships and privations he endured with courage and cheerfulness were even more recompensed in his eyes by the consciousness of the part he had borne in the putting down of the rebellion than by the medal that was awarded to him for his services.

Bertram next turned his energies from fighting to legal studies, and read law so hard, and passed his examinations in it so quickly, that it was not long before his call to the Canadian bar led to his becoming a Q.C. He took up his abode in the small town of Moosomin, in the North-West Territories, which he and others believed to be a growing township which would in time afford him a good practice. But their hopes were doomed to disappointment, for the miles of prairie which surrounded it and looked so gay in summer, adorned with brilliant flowers of every hue, were all through the winter an

unbroken expanse of dazzlingly white snow that lay for months without melting and cut off all communication with the outer world, rendering Moosomin dreary beyond words, and preventing its ever rising above the level of a small country town.

For a time Bertram got carried away by the wave of excitement that bore many to Klondyke, and he had some success with a little interlude of gold working not far from that region, and quite enjoyed returning for a while to the adventurous life of his youth. Bidding farewell to his books—save the Bible and Shakespeare, from which he never parted, and out of each of which he read a daily portion - he took up his abode for months upon an island in the middle of a river, and used, day after day, to stand at work up to his waist in ice-cold water. From leading this roughly primitive life, he came straight to London and Oxford, and mixed in the most intellectual circles of these centres of learning as if he had always belonged to their learned sets. After Dr Creighton,

the late Bishop of London, had been sitting next him at a club dinner, he remarked to a friend that he had much enjoyed talking to young Tennyson, as he was such an extremely well-informed man. Bertram Tennyson was a brilliant talker, with a fund of information drawn from his own varied experiences and from the pages of the many books he loved to read and whose contents he could so rapidly assimilate. He was once asked to write an article on the Japanese as an artistic race—a subject of which he knew nothing at all. In a short time the article was written, and was considered to read as if the writer had lived in Japan for years.

He had equal facility in writing poetry, and embodied some of his memories of the life of the Far West in a little privately printed volume of prose and verse, from which I extract a specimen of each, both of which were thought highly of by our uncle, Alfred Tennyson.

There is a large basis of actual fact in the tale which follows, entitled—

THE BLIZZARD.

THE sky was as blue as an Italian one. Under foot the snow was beautifully white and crisp, even in the streets of the little town of Woodville. The air was as brisk as champagne, but as champagne that bit if taken in large quantities. The sleigh bells on Stansfield's horses rang merrily as he drove down from the principal store to pull up opposite the door of the hotel as the landlord in his shirt-sleeves came hastily out and shouted :

"Say, Stan!! are you pulling out for home?"

"Right away," replied Stansfield. "Woa, mare."

"There's a woman going out to stay with the Moreton outfit," continued the landlord; "she'll be ready in two minutes, if you will give her a lift."

"Right you are," assented Stansfield; "get her to hurry up, like a good chap."

The landlord returned to the hotel, and in a very few minutes a much bundled up

figure was conducted out, introduced to Stansfield, and after she had been tucked well in with the buffalo robe, the sleigh went gaily jingling down the main street and out into the open country. The two said little, for conversation was not easy when the one had his fur collar turned up to meet his cap, and the other was well muffled in shawls.

Their way led through a pleasant, well-wooded, and settled country, along a broadly marked trail for some seven miles, till they reached the Sandstone Creek, and that crossed they emerged on a wide, white plain, destitute of trees, which, however, was well known to Stansfield, who often crossed it. Here and there, but at rare intervals, a house could be seen in the distance, like a strange shaped vessel on the wide expanse; now and again a flock of snow birds rose before the horses, wheeled, and settled again. In spite of the cold, it was a pleasant February day for the North-West.

But a change had come over the

weather—a change not unmarked by Stansfield. A white haze, like a low cloudbank, had risen in the West, and the wind began to blow a little. By-and-by the loose surface snow began to rise and drift sharply, like fine sand, across their faces, and Stansfield urged his team with cheery voice but somewhat anxious countenance. “Is it going to snow?” asked his companion, lifting her face a little out of her enshrouding shawls.

“Oh, no,” replied Stansfield, assuming a cheerfulness he did not quite feel. “The wind has risen a little, and it makes the snow drift.”

The wind increased, and the air was full of flying particles that stung the face, the horizon became blotted out, and once or twice Stansfield used the whip, the team swerved a little, and the nigh horse plunged in deeper snow as he left the trail. Stansfield uttered an exclamation of impatience as he pulled the horses back on to the road, but the wind increased, and in another ten minutes both horses were off the trail. Again Stansfield

pulled them to the right, but this time did not succeed in hitting the road. He pulled up, therefore, and leaning down asked his companion if she would hold the reins for a time.

"I think I am off the trail a bit," he said, with an assumption of carelessness. "I'll just get down and hit it off; the horses will stand all right." He was away some time, and the woman was beginning to be afraid he was lost, when he loomed up suddenly quite close in the thick snow haze.

"Have you found it?" she inquired anxiously.

"No, not exactly," he replied, "but I know the direction;" and he climbed in and started the horses again.

There was now no doubt that the situation had assumed a real gravity. The woman with him began to complain of the cold, and at last Stansfield decided to head the horses back, in order, if possible, to strike the creek, where comparative shelter could be found. He argued that, as he was going south from the creek when he lost the trail, the wind at that time blow-

ing from the west, he could keep his direction to the north by keeping the wind on his left check. On one point he could not calculate: if the wind had changed in the meantime, he would probably go as far astray as ever, but the chance of the creek appeared to be the one forlorn hope left to him.

For about two hours the horses stumbled and waded through the snow, getting weaker and weaker, while the woman at his side alternated querulous wailings at the cold, and despairing silence. The snow flew thick as ever, and the cold was intense; it was impossible to see farther than the horses' heads, and for this reason, when they began to dip down a sudden incline, Stansfield was quite unprepared with his numb hands to hold them back. For a moment he half hoped that the incline led to the Creek, but he was quickly undeceived, as the horses plunged heavily in the deep snow at the bottom of the ravine, and then fell on their noses. There was a sudden jar and crash as the tongue slipped from the

neck-yoke, struck the frozen ground and splintered in two. The horses regained their feet, half-swung round, and started to kick ; the iron came off one end of the near whipple-tree and the tug from the other end ; the free horse started ahead, and the off horse kicked his whipple-tree in two. In another moment the reins slipped through Stansfield's stiff fingers, and the team disappeared in the flying snow.

The situation had become desperate. The blizzard still continued to rage with unabated fury, the cold was appalling, the horses were gone, and Stansfield was alone with a weak woman for a companion. One faint ray of hope alone remained. The ravine, probably, led to the Sandstone Creek, and by following its windings, which were sure to be many, they might, if their strength held out, eventually reach the Creek. The only other possible alternative was to turn the sleigh-box on its side for a break-wind, and lie down, wrapped in furs, behind its shelter till the storm moderated and they had a chance to look about them. Stansfield felt that

under the circumstances his companion must be told of the two alternatives and given her choice, but the woman unhesitatingly declared for going forward. Stay in that dismal spot she would not, and she was certain the Creek was near. Stansfield, hoping against hope, inwardly prayed for the sheltering bluffs, and taking his companion's arm they started on their toilsome journey.

Try as they would, however, they could not keep to the ravine. Walking along the bottom was impossible, owing to the deepness of the drift, so they took the right-hand bank, but even then, with all their determination and knowledge of the direction, they could not always face the blast; they must at times turn from it for relief, except when the winding of the ravine brought the wind at their backs. The end was that they lost the ravine, as they had the trail, and like strayed cattle went down the wind, utterly and completely ignorant of their whereabouts. But now the woman began to grow weary and to insist upon sitting down for a

minute. This Stansfield, in the utmost alarm, strenuously resisted, and she tugged at his arm like a petulant child, crying that she was only a woman and could not walk as he did. At length she fairly slipped from his arm and sat down. Stansfield pulled her instantly and roughly to her feet, at which she flashed into anger and rallied for a time. But the fatal death with which the Frost King slays his victims was upon her, and she sat down again. This time Stansfield actually struck and beat her, but she would not be roused, only faintly moaned. In utter despair the man raised her in his arms and started forward at a run; in three steps he stumbled and fell, and when he let her go to rise again she slipped gently down in a snow drift, with her head upon her hand, like a little child nestling in its cot, gave a gentle sigh, and closed her eyes. Thereupon rose the most desperate struggle in Stansfield's heart which the mind of man can conceive. To stay with the woman meant certain death to both, to go forward a chance for him, and a

chance, one in a million, that he might shortly find a house and bring help to the woman. But then to leave a woman in dire extremity? Again he fell to cuffing and pinching her, as well as his half frozen hands would serve, but all to no purpose; again he raised her in his arms and went forward, more carefully this time; again he fell, and this time she fell all abroad and helpless; she was either dead or on the borderland. Stansfield looked at her for one moment, then started and arranged the sprawling limbs, and ran from her wildly into the storm.

How long he ran, how often he fell, it is impossible to say, but he came to himself to find the storm gone down and the day on its decline. He stood alone in the vast white plain, and scan the horizon as he might, nothing was in view. Nothing! As for the woman she was not to be seen, but that mattered little, she was beyond all help from man.

The sun went down, the stars came out, later the moon rose, flooding the snow with a ghastly radiance, and Stansfield

walked through the night. Morning dawned with a shudder, colder than night, in a long level band of amber and tawny red, and the stars faded away. Still he walked and still the horizon was broad and blank. Stansfield was walking in a dogged way towards a terrace in the prairie which obstructed his forward view. Surmounting it he gazed on the surrounding country; it was as blank as the sky above him. Then he fell on his knees, with arms outstretched, and prayed aloud in that vast wilderness to God, the all-merciful, the all-powerful, to succour him in this his utmost need. The rising sun struck from him a huge shadow across the snow in the form of a gigantic cross; the pitiless blue heaven looked down with an ironical smile on the solitary man wrestling for his life against nature in her most cruel mood. He rose again, and, with some sort of faith in him from the fervency of his own outcry, went forward, paying no heed whither he bent his steps, with his eyes upon the ground.

As he walked thus he suddenly stopped,

then went forward eagerly, for he had seen the tracks of a man's footprints upon the snow, leading in the direction he was then travelling in. Far different were his feelings from those of Robinson Crusoe at a similar sight. His heart was suffused with joy and gratitude to God, hope again sprang up in his bosom, and he felt again the imminent presence of cheerful human kind and the warmth of houses. His eyes again searched the wild and still blank horizon, but though nothing was in sight, as ever, he knew, as every plainsman does, that the seeming flatness of the prairie was but an optical illusion, and that many houses might be concealed in its hollows and ravines.

Taking this new guide, he became aware of the tracks of another man which led into the footprints he was already following. This sight confirmed his hopes, for, through his previous walk he was followed by a haunting fear that, perhaps, the footsteps he followed were those of some unfortunate, astray like himself. But now this was impossible;

this second track was confirmation strong as Holy writ, and he pressed forward with new energy.

He walked thus for about half an hour, until he was aware of a third set of tracks leading into these he followed.

For one moment his heart bounded with even greater joy, but it was but momentary. He cast a swift glance right and left, and recognised a small bunch of willow he had already passed. He was walking round in an ever narrowing circle, following his own footsteps.

It is impossible to describe the revulsion of feeling that wrung the poor wretch's soul. From being buoyed, as on wings, to Heaven, to be dashed to the greatest depth of Hell—Dante's frozen circle. For a space of time he stood mute, and then fell on his knees as before, and raising his clinched hand to Heaven cursed the God who had not only left him to die, but had added bitterness to his cup with that last drop of blighted hope; and the pitiless blue heavens looked down on the man blas-

pheming his Maker, with the same ironical smile as before. He cursed his God, but did not lie down to die; the Anglo-Saxon race are made of sterner stuff than that; he rose to his feet, and stumbled forward, desperate, heedless of where he went.

The sun was now some distance above the horizon, and the glare from the white surface of the snow became intolerable. Stansfield felt little sharp pricks in his eyes—a premonition he well knew—so he drew his cap as close over his brows as possible, and, as it did not signify whither he went as far as he knew, covered his eyes with his hand as much as possible.

But now being unable to see, he stumbled over small inequalities in the snow, and frequently had to throw out his hands to save himself from falling, necessarily constantly exposing his eyes, and the sunlight stabbed them like a knife. Soon his eyes began to run mucus, and shortly he was unable to open them, henceforth all was night. Onward he went, often falling, sometimes running, having no account of time, or whither he went;

while to his agonised soul came the conviction that he might pass within a few yards of shelter, knowing it not. Hunger was dead with him ; but he was consumed with thirst. Strange amongst abundance of snow this should be the case, but the verdict of huntsmen and plainmen on this point seems to be unanimous. The small quantity of real liquid possible to take at a time seems to aggravate the thirst.

On, on, he went, minutes might be hours, hours days. He might be again walking in a circle or still farther out into the illimitable inane ; and as he wandered thus, lost to hope, his hands frozen, his legs stiff to the knees, he heard the barking of a dog. He raised his tired head erect once more, and turned his sightless eyes towards the sound ; he listened again. Yes ! there was no mistake about it, and hope, but now forgotten, once more reanimated the poor wreck of humanity. Strung to one last effort he started forward at a feeble run, fell, rose, stumbled, and fell again, and rose no more.

The little child awoke to find his mother bending over his cot to give him a good-night kiss. She was evidently going to some party, for she wore a white camellia in her glossy dark hair and jewels gleamed on her bosom and wrists. The little boy awoke enough to put his arms around her neck and catch the dainty perfume from her hair; then he fell back into the dreamless sleep of childhood. These are the little things one remembers through all the after years.

A little later the boy remembers his nurse dressing him in the cosy nursery, when the younger children are in their cots. He has on his blue velvet frock, surmounted with white lace, through which the blue shows bravely, and his fair head is crowned with a great golden curl. He is taken to the dining-room, where he sees his father at the head of the long table, round which sit many gentlemen in black clothes and white shirt fronts. The long mahogany table gleams under the light of the candles in the silver sconces; fruit and decanters of

ruby wine are on the table, and he is allowed to sit at his father's right hand. His father gives him a very little claret at the bottom of a wine glass, and he gravely drinks to the health of his father's guests with a little bow. Then, after a few pleasant jests from the gentlemen, which he doesn't exactly understand, but takes in good part, he is carried off to bed, sleepy, yet happy, thinking himself already almost a man.

Later still he can remember a high curtained bed, and a fire that crackles and flashes, making the old portraits round the room leap from the darkness and retire again, as if, indeed, they meant to step from their frames, and in a moment thought better of it. Outside the wind whistles and howls round the corners of the house, and the rain pours. A belated wayfarer's footfalls grow out of the distance, ring down the pavement, and fade away again, while the boy nestles down in the bedclothes, secure in warmth and protection.

Again, he can remember school, with

all its trouble and joys, and how on one occasion he, a child of ten, ran between the legs of long Evans, as he came hurtling down the football field, and sent that five feet ten of muscle and good nature flying on his head, amidst tumults of applause; the first applause of his life, and perhaps the most spontaneous. Nor are you forgotten, old Alma Mater; the gardens of St John's, the twisted columns of St Mary's, the quiet quaintness of Turl Street, even the solitary lamp-post which keeps Grove Street inviolate from all vehicular traffic, all are remembered; many a time in some wide and ringing avenue of the new West, the young man has sighed for the sound of the rowlock on the river, the leafy solitudes of the Cherwell. To have been at Oxford once more he would have even braved the pernicious Proctor on his prowls. But these days are passed for ever.

Spring has come again, and the chestnut trees hold out imploring palms to the fickle April sun. There is a shimmer of green on the birches, a delicate hint of

spring, and the rooks caw in the tardy elms. As the young man passes through the wood the leaves of yester year are as a carpet to his feet. Soon he is past the wood and is on the open hill. He stands at the top of a hundred or more rude, worn, stone steps, up and down which a saintly hermit of old went twice a day on his knees. The young man looks out upon that country he has learned to love so well in his exile, loved better than all the world beside, aye! perhaps, even better than his mistress. He looks out, in front, on a placid sea, grey now from the April clouds passing athwart the sun, but on the far horizon glitters a line of brilliant light. To his right and below him is a rich level country between the two promontories which jut into the sea, and midway this champaign he sees the tower of the old Cistercian Monastery, reft long years ago by the Crown from the church, now a farm-house, where the cattle stable where the monks have dined. Further away a little coast town gleams white in the distance, and almost

below his feet is the square grey tower of the parish church, with the starlings circling round it. The Rectory, deep in its terraced garden, nestles close to the shoulder of the tower as if for protection, and underneath the leafless pink of a blossoming almond tree he sees the flutter of a dress. Now the clouds drift away, and he is sure that he sees her, who to him is the priceless gem of which all the surroundings are, after all, only the setting. He starts joyfully on his downward way, and mellow and sweet the cuckoo calls from the hill. The cuckoo—calls—from the hill.

It is night, and nothing breaks the vast white expanse, save one prone and motionless figure. A little, bitter wind arises, and the lightly drifting snow begins already to powder the dark form with white, indicative of the nameless grave and the remorseless shroud soon to be. From far away in the distance comes in dismal ululation the cry of a wolf, canorous of death.

The poem which follows was addressed to an old comrade who had gone back to England.

*Is your seat as firm as ever, is your eye
as keen and true,
Can you rope a flying foreleg, as once you
used to do?
Can you ride a bucking broncho, can you
spot a stranger's brand,
Or head the wild stampede at night and
turn the rushing band?*

BRONCHO DAYS.

How is it with you now, old chum? In
England's crowded ways,
To you immured in brick and stone the
thought of other days
Must sometimes come when breezes stir
the roses on your lawn,
And once again you rise with me and
saddle up at dawn.

The light is level on the sward, the old
times come again,
Your broncho feels the warning heel and
reaches at the rein ;
Oh ! merrily the heavy bit chimes in with
jingling spur,
The flapping fringes on our chapps make
just a pleasant stir.

The hoof strokes fall with rhythmic beat,
the road is flying by,
And all the world is yet asleep, save only
you and I.
The bronchos feel their oats to-day, the
world is wild and wide,
Let go their heads, and let them swing
their gallop stride for stride.

And when we stop beside the slough to
let our horses drink,
The air is pure, and close at hand a tune-
ful bob-o-linc'
Sings his sweet matins to the morn ;
perched low upon a spray,
The meadow lark calls back to him,
responsive to his lay.

The pasque blooms linger here and there ;
the tiger lily gems
With points of red the grassy sward, and
on their slender stems
The fragile bluebells nod their heads to
every passing breeze,
That shakes the petal from the rose, and
whispers to the trees.

'Tis all a dream ; an ocean wide is cold
between us twain,
And nevermore together shall we ride the
Western plain,
Or camped in comfort hear the wolf, and
on the sky-line clear
See the quick broncho lift his head and
slant a startled ear.

The world is fair in this new land, and
yet I envy you,
For we have not the primrose pale, and
though 'tis just as blue,
The violet, in exile here, throws out a
scentless bloom ;
The rose is fair as England's rose, but has
not its perfume.

No thrush sings England's ballads, no
blackbird whistles clear,
No skylark wings to heaven the day's
sweet pioneer,
And chief of all the sights I love I long
to see the glade
Where the lily of the valley grows be-
neath the coppice shade ;

And chief of all the sounds I love, I long
to hear the sea
Break on the shores of England when the
scud is flying free ;
Or, in its calmer moments, when the
ripples kiss the strand,
Beneath the tall white cliffs of chalk that
guard the English land.

But we'll meet some day or other, no
doubt, at last in town,
Two old bow-windowed beggars, with the
grey streaked thro' the brown ;
And we'll agree in spite of fate, there's
one thing all repays,
'Tis to fight once more the battles of our
good old broncho days.

Thus far I wrote, in hope that you would
 sometime scan these rhymes,
And overlook their many faults for sake
 of youthful times ;
But, wider than the ocean, between us
 yawns the grave,
And one is left, the other sleeps beyond
 the restless wave.

Sleep in your quiet churchyard, true
 heart that's still at last,
Whose every red pulsation beat friend-
 ship firm and fast ;
Pray God the stories of our youth are not
 all quite in vain,
I hope for some world far from this where
 old friends meet again.

*The sky is clear above me, and the turf is
 sound below,
The free wind flies to meet me and fans
 me as I go,
The tree-tops bend and rustle, the world
 is fair to see,
But you are not beside me now, nor ever
 more will be.*

Little did Bertram Tennyson think as he penned these stirring and pathetic lines how soon he was to join his friend in the silent land. He was born in London, and always said there was no place to compare with it, so that there seemed a certain fitness in his death there, on September 26th, 1900, cut off by influenza, in the midst of a career of much promise.

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